

THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH,
MAY ALLAH'S BLESSINGS AND PEACE BE UPON HIM, SAID,

طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ

"Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim."

OUR MASTER, THE ARRANGER OF THE RATIB,
IMAM 'ABDULLAH BIN 'ALAWI AL-HADDAD, SAID,

*"It is obligatory upon the Muslim to know
every obligation [fardu ain] he must comply with
and every forbidden [haram] subject he may commit."*



ISBN: 978 - 981 - 05 - 3399 - 3
Magam Imam Alhaddad
Tarim, Hawi Hadhramaut

RELIGIOUS ADVICE & ACOUNSEL ON FAITH

Imam 'Abdullah bin 'Alawi al-Haddad

النصائح الدينية والوصايا الإيمانية

An Naṣāih id-Dīniyya wal Waṣāyā al-Īmāniyya

RELIGIOUS ADVICE & COUNSEL ON FAITH

Imam al-Haddad

al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini
May Allah, the Exalted Have Mercy Upon Him



لِقَامُ الْإِسْلَامِ الْحَرَامِ

تَرْيَمُ
الْحَاوِي
ت: ١٥٩٤٤
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

النَّصَائِحُ الدِّينِيَّةُ وَالْوَصَايَا الْإِيمَانِيَّةُ

An Nasaih id-Diniyya wal Wasaya al-Imaniyyah.
Religious Advice and Counsel on Faith

Imam al-Haddad

al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini

May Allah, the Exalted Have Mercy Upon Him

Door



An English Translation

النَّصَائِحُ الدِّينِيَّةُ وَالْوَصَايَا الْإِيمَانِيَّةُ.

لِلْإِمَامِ شَيْخِ الْإِسْلَامِ قُطْبِ الدَّعْوَةِ وَالْإِرْشَادِ

الْحَبِيبِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَلَوِي الْحَدَّادِ

الْحَضْرَمِيِّ الشَّافِعِيِّ الْحُسَيْنِيِّ

رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

Front Cover showing the restored front door entrance to
Imam al-Haddad House in Hawi Tarim Hadhramaut Yemen

Religious Advice and Counsel on Faith

By the Imam, al-Sheikh of Islam,
the Pivot of *Dakwah*, the Guiding Light
the Beloved Abdullah bin Alwi al-Haddad
al-Hadhrami, al-Shafii, al-Hussaini
May Allah, the Exalted have mercy upon him

An English Translation

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the Charity

Inquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms and in other countries send via email to abdulkader_alhadad@yahoo.com

ISBN: 978 – 981 – 05 – 3399 – 3

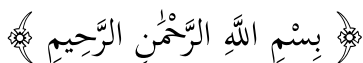
Maqam Imam Alhadad

Charity of Habib Esa bin Abdulkader bin Ahmad Alhadad

Contents

A Short Biography of Imam Al-Haddad	6
Prologue	11
Chapter One	Be Mindful of Your Duty to Allah [<i>Taqwa</i>]
Chapter Two	Knowledge
Chapter Three	Ritual Prayer
Chapter Four	Zakat
Chapter Five	Fasting
Chapter Six	Pilgrimage
Chapter Seven	Reciting the Quran
Chapter Eight	Remembrance and Invocation
Chapter Nine	Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil
Chapter Ten	Striving for Allah [<i>Jihad</i>]
Chapter Eleven	Duties
Chapter Twelve	Rights
Chapter Thirteen	Actions and Deeds that Ruin
Chapter Fourteen	Actions and Deeds that Save
Chapter Fifteen	The Creed According to Imam Alhaddad
	Conclusion
	Afterword

A Short Biography of Imam Al-Haddad



In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

He is Al-Imam Al-Habib Abdullah bin Alawi Bin Muhammad Al-Haddad, the famous Imam, the Shaykh of Islam, the foremost of the people unification. The noble descendant of the Prophet, Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, a descendant of Al-Imam Hussein, may Allah be pleased with him the Shaykh Abdullah ibn Alawi Al-Haddad Al-Alawi, may Allah reward him for us with the best rewards He gives those of His people who guide us to Him.

He was born in Subair, a small suburb in Tarim, Hadhramaut, South Yemen, on the night 5 Safar 1044 after Hijrah. Tarim was already a centre of the learned *Asyraf* of the descendant of Saiyidina Hussein bin Ali bin Abu Talib. He grew up in an enlightened environment. He was raised and educated there, originally taught by his father, and was never seen to show the recklessness of other children. He lost his eyesight while still young yet granted the power of discernment as compensation. He gathered as he grew, the best of knowledge and spirituality, and became outstanding in knowledge, guidance, calling people to Allah, and being a shaykh in the perfect sense of the word. He was given the title Pole of Guidance [*Qutbul Irshad*] by the greatest of the people of knowledge in his time and after that until today.

Some have said that there were three ranks in calling to Allah, according to whether it was by pen, tongue or foot (travelling). All three combined to perfection in the works of Imam Al-Haddad, may Allah shower His mercy upon him. His books are still in print in Egypt, India, Hijaz, Istanbul, and Java. His fame spread throughout the Muslim world, and his writings which based on the Quran and the practices of the Prophet [*Sunnah*] were never criticised nor thought to be controversial.

His roots from the Prophet Muhammad, the messenger of Allah, blessings and peace upon him, from Fatima Az-Zahraa, daughter of

Muhammad and Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, Gate to (The Radiant) the City of Knowledge, may Allah be pleased with him and all his descendants.

Then on from Al-Imam Hussein > Imam Ali Zainal Abidin > Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir > Imam Jaafar As-Saadiq > Imam Ali Al-Uraidhi > Imam Muhammad An-Naqib > Isa Ar-Rumi > Ahmad Al-Muhajir illa Allah > Ubaidillah > Alawi > Muhammad > Alawi > Ali Khali' Qassam > Muhammad of Mirbat > Alawi > Abdur Rahman > Ahmad Al-Faqih > Abdullah > Muhammad > Ahmad > Abu Bakr At-Tawil > Ahmad Al-Haddad > Alawi > Muhammad > Abdullah > Ahmad > Muhammad > Alawi > Abdullah Qutbul Irshad.

He earnestly sought knowledge, accompanying such scholars as:

1. al-Habib Umar bin Abdul Rahman Al-Attas
2. al-Habib Oukail bin Abdurrahman As-Saqqaf
3. al-Habib Abdurrahman bin Syaikh Aideed
4. al-Habib Sahl Bin Ahmed Bahasan Al-Hadeely Baalwi
5. as-Saeed Muhammad Bin Alwi As-Saqqaf

Amongst his students are:

1. His son, our leader al-Habib Hassan bin Abdullah Al-Haddad.
2. al-Habib Ahmad bin Zain Al-Habshee
3. al-Habib Abdurrahman bin Abdullah Bilfaqeh
4. al-Habib Muhammad bin Zain bin Semait
5. al-Habib Umar bin Zain bin Semait
6. al-Habib Umar bin Abdurrahman Al-Bar
7. al-Habib Ali bin Abdullah bin Abdurrahman As-Saqqaf
8. al-Habib Muhammad bin Umar bin Taha As-Safi As-Saqqaf and many others.

It seems as he was selected to carry out the mission of *dakwah* for Islam and spiritual guidance using wit and wisdom. People eventually entirely attended to him and, his name has become popular.

People from different fields of life benefited from his books, preaches and guidance. His missions received people's approval and love. His publications translated into English, Malay, French and other languages. He passed away on the evening of Tuesday, 7 *Dzulqaedah* 1132 Hijrah and buried in a simple grave at the graveyard of Zanbal in Tarim. May Allah show mercy on him and reward him abundantly.

His publications are distinctively popular among the old and young then and till now. They include the following:

١. النَّصَائِحُ الدِّينِيَّةُ وَالْوَصَايَا الْإِيمَانِيَّةُ.

An Nasaih id-Diniyya wal Wasaya al-Imaniyyah.

1. Religious Advice and Counsel on Faith.

٢. الدَّعْوَةُ التَّامَّةُ وَالتَّذَكِيرُ الْعَامَّةُ.

Ad-Da'watut-Taammah wat-Tadhkiratul 'Aammah.

2. Perfect Summons and General Admonition.

٣. رِسَالَةُ الْمَعَاوَنَةِ وَالْمُظَاهَرَةِ وَالْمُؤَارَاةِ لِلرَّاغِبِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي سُلُوكِ طَرِيقِ الْآخِرَةِ.

Risalatul Mu'awanah wal Muzhaharah wal Mu'azarah Lir-Raagibeen Minal Mu'mineen Fee Suluki Tariq-al-Akhirah.

3. The Book of Assistance, Support and Encouragement for Such Believers as Desire to Follow the Way of the Afterlife.

٤. الْفُصُولُ الْعِلْمِيَّةُ وَالْأُصُولُ الْحِكْمِيَّةُ.

Al-Fusul ul-'Ilmiyyah wal Usul ul-Hikamiyyah.

4. Knowledge and the Principles of Wisdom.

٥. سَبِيلُ الْإِذْكَارِ وَالْإِعْتِبَارِ بِمَا يَمُرُّ بِالْإِنْسَانِ وَيَنْقُضِي لَهُ مِنَ الْأَعْمَارِ.

*Sabilul-Iddhikaar wal-I'tibaar Bima Yamurru bil-Insan
Wa Yanqadhee Lahu Minal A'maar.*

5. The Way to Remember and Learn from the Lives of Man that Wane and Perish.

٦. رِسَالَةُ الْمُذَاكَرَةِ مَعَ الْإِخْوَانِ الْمُحِبِّينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْحَيْرِ وَالْدِّينِ.

*Risalatul Muzhaakarah Ma'al-Ikhwaanil-Muhibbeen Min
Ahlil Khayr Waddeen.*

6. A Discussion Among Brothers and the Loved Ones From Among the Righteous in Good Deeds and Faith.

٧. رِسَالَةُ آدَابِ سُلُوكِ الْمُرِيدِ. *Rislatu Aadaabi Suluk il-Murid.*

7. The Book of Discipline in the Path of the Seeker.

٨. كِتَابُ الْحِكَمِ. *Kitaabul Hikam.*

8. Book of Wisdom.

٩. النَّفَائِسُ الْعَلَوِيَّةُ فِي الْمَسَائِلِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ.

An-Nafaais-il Alawiyyah fil Masaail-as-Sufiyyah.

9. The Gems of the Alawiyya Concerning Sufism.

١٠. إِثْحَافُ السَّائِلِ بِجَوَابِ الْمَسَائِلِ.

Ithaaf is-Saail bi-Jawabil Masaail.

10. The Gifts for the Seeker Being Some Answered Questions.

١١. الْوَصَايَا النَّافِعَةُ. *Al Wasaya an-nafi'ah.*

11. Beneficial Religious Counsels.

١٢. وَسِيْلَةُ الْعِبَادِ إِلَى زَادِ الْمَعَادِ.

Waseelatul 'Ibaad Ilaa Zaadil Ma'aad.

12. A Means for People to Provide for the Hereafter.
(A Compilation of the Imam Azkaar and Awraad, including *Wirdul Latif*, *Wirdul Kabir*, *Ratib al-Shahir*, *Hizbul-Fath* and *Hizbun-Nasr* by Habib Muhamad bin Alawi Al- Haddad).

١٣. الدُّرُّ الْمَنْظُومُ لِذَوِي الْعُقُولِ وَالْفُهُومِ.

Ad-Durrul Mandhum Li zawiil 'Uqul Wal Fuhum.

13. Poetic Pearls for Discerning and Understanding Minds.
This book is his *Diwan*, the best of his *Qaseedas*.

١٤. تَثْبِيْثُ الْقُوَادِ - بِذِكْرِ كَالَمِ مَجَالِسِ.

Tathbitul fu'ad bizikir kalam majilis.

14. Affirming of the Hearts - with Remembrance of the
Speeches at Majlis Volume I and Volume II.

١٥. مُكَاتِبَاتُ الْإِمَامِ الْحَدَّادِ. *Mukatibat Al-Imam Al-Haddad.*

15. Correspondences of Imam Al-Haddad.

Most of Imam Al-Haddad's manuscripts were recompiled by Habib Ali bin Isa bin Abdulkader Al-Haddad, who was born in Singapore and educated in Tarim. They were subsequently re-edited, reprinted, translated and distributed by various inspired parties.

Scholars, as well as the laymen, so highly admired the works that they would read them repeatedly. These scholarly works have also been described as a summary of the quintessence of Scholar Ghazali's literature and eventually indispensable as being brief, but comprehensive.

Prologue

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾

In the Name of Allah All-Merciful and Compassionate

﴿فَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ﴾

There is neither ability nor power
except Allah the Most High, the Most Formidable.

﴿سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

“Glory to You, We do not have knowledge except what You have taught us. In truth, it is You Who are perfect in knowledge and wisdom.”¹

Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, who caused summoning to guidance, showing where the good lies, and counselling Muslims, to be one of the best acts of worship and the highest degrees, and the most important of things religious. This is the way of Allah’s Prophets and Messengers, His virtuous saints and those scholars who practice what they know and are firmly rooted in knowledge and certainty. And May Allah’s blessings and peace be upon our Master and Patron Muhammad, the trustworthy Messenger, the high ranking Beloved, the leader of the Allah-fearing, the master of the earlier and the later generations upon his sincere and truthful family and Companions, and upon those who follow them with excellence till Judgment Day.

To proceed: The Messenger of Allah may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَهَاجَرَتْهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى دُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا، أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يُنْكِحُهَا، فَهَاجَرَتْهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ.

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 32.

“Indeed, all actions are but by intentions and to each person what he intended. If he whose emigration was to Allah and His Messenger, his emigration is to Allah and His Messenger. He whose emigration is to something of the world he desires or a woman he wishes to marry his emigration is to that which he has emigrated to?”

And he said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

“Religion is but good counsel.” الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ.

They asked, for whom, O Messenger of Allah? He answered,

لِلَّهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِأَئِمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ.

“For Allah, His Book and His Messenger for the leaders of the Muslims and their common people.”

In this book, we have authored, compiling therein some counsels of religion and exhortations of faith. We intended to make it of benefit to ourselves and others and to be a reminder for ourselves and our Muslim brothers. We have written it in an easily accessible style, using ordinary, understandable expressions that it may be understood by the elite and the common people among those who are people of good in faith [*Iman*] and Islam.

We have called it: The Book of Religious Advice and Counsel on Faith. We ask Allah the Exalted to cause it to be purely for the sake of His Noble Countenance, to draw us near to His proximity in the Gardens of Bliss. And to make great its benefit both to all our fellow believers and us, for He is Worthy of this and Capable of it.

﴿حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ﴾

Allah is sufficient for us,

﴿وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾

And He is the Best of Patrons,

﴿وَمَا التَّوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ﴾

And whatever my Success except that it is from Allah.

Upon Him do I rely on and to Him do I repent.

Chapter One

*Taqwa*¹

Allah, the Exalted says,

“وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَدِيثًا. ”² “And whose word can be truer than Allah’s?”

“وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا. ”³ “And whose word can be truer than Allah’s?”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ. وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ. وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ. وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ عَذَابُ عَظِيمٍ.

“O you who believe! Fear and be mindful of your duties to Allah as He should be feared and die not except in a state of Islam. And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah stretches out for you. And be not divided among yourselves. And remember with gratitude Allah’s favour

¹ There is no one word translation of *Taqwa*. We prefer to the phrase “fear Allah and be mindful of your duties to Allah”, thus exercising *taqwa* towards Allah.

² Surah 4 An Nisaa, End of Verse 87.

³ Surah 4 An Nisaa, End of Verse 122.

on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love so that by His Grace, you became brothers and you were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, Allah makes His Signs clear to guide you. Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.”¹

Then the Exalted says, يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ.

“O you who believe! Exercise *taqwa* towards Allah as He truly should be *taqwa*.”

It is as if He had gathered you to exercise *taqwa* towards Him, Transcendent is He, everything good, both immediate and delayed, then enjoined it upon His believing servants, that they may succeed and gain all the goodness and merits in it, as well as happiness and success. He did this in compassion for His believing servants, for He is ever Compassionate to the believers.

Taqwa is the counsel that the Lord of the Worlds gave both the ancients and the latecomers. Allah, the Exalted say,

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ.

“Verily we have directed the People of the Book before you, and you (O Muslims) to exercise *taqwa* towards Allah.”²

For there is no good, immediate or remote, outward or inward, but that the fear of Allah is the path leading to it and the means to reach it. And there is no evil, immediate or remote, outward or inward, but that to exercise *taqwa* towards of Allah is the strongest protection and most powerful defence against it, to escape its harm. There are numerous major benefactions, and immense good fortunes said to depend on it by Allah the Formidable in His Mighty Book.

Among these are:

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verses 102 – 105.

² Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 131.

- **Being with Allah**, which is the gentle, protective togetherness, Allah, Exalted is He, says, وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ.

“Exercise *taqwa* towards Allah and know that Allah is with those exercise *taqwa*.”¹

- And from **the aspect of divine science** [*ilm al laduni*], Allah the Exalted says, وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ.

“Exercise *taqwa* towards Allah and Allah will teach you (directly).”²

- And **at times of confusion and difficulties** provides discernment, requite your bad deeds, and forgiving of sins. And Allah, the Exalted says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا، وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ، وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ.

“O you who believe! If you exercise *taqwa* towards Allah, He will grant you a criterion to judge between right and wrong, remove from you all evil that may afflict you, and forgive you: for Allah is the Lord of grace unbounded.”³

- And **safety from the Hell-Fire**.

For Allah, the Exalted says,

وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَقْضِيًّا. ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثًّا.

“Not one of you but will pass over it: this is a Decree with your Lord which must be accomplished. But We shall save those who guarded against evil, and We shall leave the wrong-doers therein, humbled to their knees.”⁴

And the Exalted says,

وَيُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ السُّوءُ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 194.

² Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 282.

³ Surah 8 Al Anfaal Verse 29.

⁴ Surah 19 Maryam Verse 71-72.

“But Allah will deliver the righteous to their place of salvation: no evil shall touch them, nor shall they grieve.”¹

- And **a way out of difficulties**, a provision from where he did not expect, erase his bad deeds and ease in life, and a great reward.

And Allah the Exalted say,

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا. وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ. وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا. وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُعْظِمْ لَهُ أَجْرًا.

“And for those who exercise *taqwa* towards Allah, He ever prepares a way out. And He provides for him from sources he never could imagine. And for those who exercise *taqwa* towards Allah, He will make their path easy. And if anyone exercise *taqwa* towards Allah, He will remove his ills, from him, and will enlarge his reward.”²

- And **the promise of the Garden**.

Allah the Exalted says, تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا.

“Such is the Garden which We give as an inheritance to those of Our servants who guard against Evil.”³

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

“The likeness of the Garden promised to those righteous who exercise *taqwa* towards Allah.”⁴

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“To those who exercise *taqwa* towards Allah, the righteous, the Garden will be brought near.”⁵

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ.

“Verily, for the Righteous, those who exercise *taqwa* towards Allah are Gardens of Delight, in the Presence of their Lord.”⁶

¹ Surah Az Zumar 39 Verse 61.

² Surah 65 At Talaq Verse 2, 3, 4 and 5.

³ Surah 19 Maryam Verse 63.

⁴ Surah 13 Ar Rad Verse 35.

⁵ Surah 26 Ash Shuaraa Verse 90.

⁶ Surah 68 Al Qalam Verse 64.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ. فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ.

“As to the Righteous, those who exercise *taqwa* of Allah they will be in Gardens and Rivers in an Assembly of Truth, in the Presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent.”¹

➤ And, **Honor in this world and the hereafter.**

Allah, the Exalted say, إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ.

“Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous, those who exercise *taqwa* towards Allah.”²

Thus did He make honour in His sight conditional upon *taqwa*, not upon lineage, not upon wealth or any other thing. Often have Allah and His Messenger promised those who exercise *taqwa* towards Allah goodness, happiness, degrees, rewards, wellbeing, success, gifts, and gains the mention of which would be too lengthy and the enumeration of which impossible granted.

How excellent in this context is the following verses:

He who exercises *taqwa* towards Allah is,
The one whom profitable commerce granted.

As also the following verses:

He who knows Allah but finds not in this knowledge,
all that he needs, he indeed is wretched.

He who serves Allah is never injured,
by what he may suffer in His service.

What gains a servant from the eminence of wealth,
Since all eminence belongs to those who is *taqwa*.

Scholars Advice on *Taqwa*

Some scholars, may Allah be pleased with them, have said that *Taqwa* is to obey Allah the Exalted's injunctions, and avoid what He has prohibited, outwardly and inwardly, together with feeling how formidable. He is and being in fear, awe, and dread of Him.

¹ Surah 54 Al Qamar Verse 54 – 55.

² Surah 49 Al Hujuraat Verse 13.

Certain commentators of the Quran, may Allah have mercy upon them, said that His, Exalted is He, saying,

“*taqwa* towards Allah as He truly should be *taqwa*.”¹ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ.

means that He should be ever obeyed and never disobeyed, ever remembered and never forgotten and ever thanked and never have His favours denied. (End of Quote).

The servant of Allah will never be able to exercise *taqwa* towards Allah as He rightly should be *taqwa*. Even if he is to have a million soul added to his, and a million life span added to his; and were he to spend all of them in serving Allah and in doing what pleases Him, this is because of the immensity of Allah’s rights upon His servants, His awesome greatness, His lofty degree, and His sublime glory.

The best and most perfect of all who have ever acquitted themselves of Allah’s rights upon them, Muhammad, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, confessing his inability to praise Allah as He should be praised, said in his supplication to Him,

أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخِطِكَ، وَبِمَعَاذِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ. لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ.

“I seek refuge in Your satisfaction from Your wrath, in Your safeguard from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot exhaust Your praises, and You are as You have praised Yourself.”

The books informed us that Allah has angels since their creation, whose state is to remain constantly bowing or prostrating, extolling and sanctifying Allah, never slackening, never attending to other than Him.

During the Judgment Day, they will say,

سُبْحَانَكَ وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ! مَا عَرَفْنَاكَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِكَ! وَلَا عَبْدْنَاكَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِكَ.

“Transcendent is You! Yours are all praises and thanks! We have not known You as You should be known, neither have we worshipped You as You should be!”

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 102.

Other scholars have said that His saying,

“اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ.”¹ “*taqwa* towards Allah as He truly should be *taqwa*.”

The above phrase was abrogated by His saying below,

“فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ.”² “So, exercise *taqwa* towards Allah as best you can.”

Still, others said that the second verse merely explains the meaning of the first but does not abrogate it. This last opinion is the correct one, Allah willing, for Allah, Exalted is He, and to Him, all praises imposes upon a soul only that which it is capable. It is His right to impose more should He so wish and command, for it is His to do what He will in His kingdom, His domain. But He has lightened the burden, Transcendent is He, and made things easy. Just as He, Exalted is He, says, يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا.

“Allah does wish to lighten your difficulties for man was created weak.”³

And He, Exalted is He, says, يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ.

“Allah desire ease for you and does not desire hardship for you.”⁴

Imam al-Ghaza, may Allah have mercy on him said in his “Thya” that when this saying of His, Exalted is He, was revealed,

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبُكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ.

“To Allah belong all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether you show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah calls on you to account for it.”⁵

The Companions of the Messenger of Allah were distraught, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, and may He be pleased with them. They came to him saying, “O Messenger of Allah, we cannot possibly bear what has been imposed upon us to account for every incidental thought. He said to them, may peace be upon him,

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 102.

² Surah 64 at Taghazbun Verse 16.

³ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 28.

⁴ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 185.

⁵ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 284.

أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَقُولُوا كَمَا قَالَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ ؟ " سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا ! " وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا: " سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا، غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ.

“Do you wish to say, as the people of Israelites said, “We hear and disobey?” Or rather you should say, “We hear and obey, we seek Your forgiveness, O our Lord; to You is the destination.”

When they repeated this, Allah revealed,

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ.

“The Messenger believes in what was sent down to him by his Lord, and so do the believers.”¹

Thus did Allah recount in the Quran what they said, as well as the rest of their prayers to Him. He brings them not to account for acts done in forgetfulness or by mistake. So He does not impose hard rules upon them. Soon He will respond to them, made things lighter and easier for them, and relieved them of hardship. May He be praised and thanked in abundance.

The Prophet, may peace be upon him explained and confirmed this when he said,

تُجَوِّزُ لِي عَنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَطَأَ وَالنِّسْيَانَ وَمَا اسْتُكِّرَ هُوَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا حَدَّثُوا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ مَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا أَوْ يَعْمَلُوا.

“That shall be overlooked for my Nation which is committed by mistake, in forgetfulness or under duress; as well as that which crosses their minds, so long as they neither utter nor do it.”

Die in the State of Islam

In His, Exalted is He, saying,

وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ. “You should not die except as Muslims.”²

This phrase is a command from Him, Transcendent is He, to die to adhere

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 285.

² Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 102.

to Islam, the religion of Allah, of which He informed us in His Book that it is the only Religion in His sight and that He will accept none other, that it is the religion He found pleasing for His Messenger and His believing servants. He, Exalted is He, says,

“The Religion before Allah is Islam.”¹ إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ.

And He, Exalted is He, says,

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ.

“If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost all spiritual good.”²

And He, Exalted is He, says,

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا.

“This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and I am pleased to choose for you Islam as your religion.”³

A human being lacks the power to force himself to die as a Muslim, but Allah has granted him the means to attain to that. When he makes use of the means, he would have done what is his to do and obeyed what he was commanded to do, namely, to intend to die a Muslim, love this, wish for it, resolve to do it, and loathe to die on any other religion. He should persist in praying for this, imploring Allah and beseeching Him to take him to Him as a Muslim. Thus, did Allah characterised His Prophets and the Virtuous among His servants. He says in mentioning Joseph, son of Jacob, may peace be upon them,

أَنْتَ وَلِيِّي فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ.

“You are my Protector in this world and the Hereafter. Take my soul at death as a Muslim and unite me with the righteous.”⁴

And in mentioning Pharaoh’s magicians when they became believers and were threatened chastisement by Pharaoh,

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 19.

² Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 85.

³ Surah 5 Al Maida Verse 3.

⁴ Surah 12 Yusuf Verse 101.

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَقَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ.

“Our Lord! Pour out on us patience and constancy and take our souls to You as Muslims.”¹

And He, Exalted is He, informed us that Abraham, may peace be upon him, exhorted his sons, and so did Jacob, may peace be upon them, to die on Islam. He, Exalted is He, says,

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ، يَا بَنِيَّ! إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

“And this was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons, and Jacob too; “O my sons! Allah has chosen the Faith for you; then die not except in the Faith of Islam.””²

Obedience Strengthen Islam and Disobedience Weaken it

A person should strive to guard his Islam and strengthen it by accomplishing those acts of obedience to Allah Exalted is He, which he is commanded to do. He who neglects Allah’s commands exposes himself to die in other than Islam. For his being neglectful is evidence that he cares little for his religion and takes it lightly.

Let every Muslim beware of this to the extreme. He should also avoid sins and evil deeds, for they weaken Islam, render it feeble, shake its foundations, and make it liable to be wrested away at the time of death as has happened to many who persistently committed such acts. May Allah protect us.

There is an indication to this in His saying, Exalted is He,

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ أَصَاءُوا الشُّوْأَىٰ أَنْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ.

“Then, evil in the extreme will be the End of those who do evil; for that, they rejected the Signs of Allah and held them up to ridicule.”³

¹ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 126.

² Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 132.

³ Surah 30 ar Rum Verse 10.

So reflect on this and impose upon yourself obedience to the injunctions of Allah the Exalted, and avoidance of what He has prohibited. Should you slip into any of these, repent to Allah, Exalted is He, and beware to the extreme to persist.

Seek a Good Ending [*Husnul Khatimah*]

You should constantly ask Allah for a good ending to your life. Because the books reported that the Devil, may Allah curse him, will say, “The one who asks for a good ending has broken my back. I then say, when will this one become proud of his deeds? I fear that he may have understood (Islam and my tricks!)”

Praise and thank Allah abundantly for the grace of Islam, for it is the greatest and most immense of graces. Were Allah to give this world and all that is in it to one of His servants, but withhold Islam it would be a catastrophe for him. But were He to grant another of His servants Islam and withhold the whole world, it would not harm him. For when the first dies he will end up in the Fire, while the second when he dies, will end up in the Garden.

Thus, you must maintain yourself in a state of fear and anxiety of a bad ending, for indeed, Allah is He who turns hearts, He guides whom He will, and leads astray whom He will. This authentic hadith helps in putting ourselves in a state of fear and anxiety, it states,

وَالَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُهُ إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ، فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا. وَإِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا.

“By He with whom there is no other God, one of you will keep doing the works of the people of the Paradise until he is one cubit away from it, then the record overtakes him, he will then behave as the people of the Fire do until he enters it. And one of you will keep doing the works of the people of the Fire until he is one cubit away from it, then the record overtakes him, will then behave as the people of the Garden do until he enters it.”

In this is a terrifying threat for people who exercise *taqwa* and rectitude, let alone people who neglect and confusion of their duties to Allah.

One of our virtuous predecessors used to say, “By Allah! None has ever felt secure from being dispossessed of his religion except he dispossessed it. Our virtuous predecessors, may Allah have mercy on them, were all extremely apprehensive of an evil conclusion [*su’ul khatimah*] to their lives, despite their good deeds and scarcity of sins.

One of them said, “If given a choice between dying as a Muslim at the door of my room or as a martyr at the door of the house, I would choose to die as a Muslim at the door of my room. The reason being I do not know what will happen to my heart in the distance between the door of my room and the door of the house.

Another said to one of his brothers when I am about to die, sit near my head and watch. If you see that I have died a Muslim take all my possessions and sell them. Then buy sweets and almonds to distribute them among the children. But if you see that I have died on other than Islam, then let the people know, so that those who wish to pray my funeral prayer would do so in full awareness.

Before that, he told the brother of a sign by which he would know whether he had died a Muslim or not. Later, his brother recounted how seen that he had died a Muslim and had distributed his donation to the children as instructed. Such narrations are many and famous.

The Disobedient dies in a State of *Suul Khatimah*

You should know that often those who neglect their obligatory prayers suffer a bad ending to their lives. Similarly, those who neglect obligatory zakat, pry upon other Muslims privacy, cheat in weights and measures, deceive Muslims and delude them by causing them confusion, whether in religious or worldly matters. A bad ending also awaits those who belie Allah’s saints and disparage them unjustly as well as those who falsely pretend they possess the states of the saints and their stations and other such things as loath in Islam.

Among other things that threaten their perpetrators most seriously with a bad ending is innovation in religion [*bidaa*] and harbouring doubts concerning Allah, His Messenger and the Last Day. So, let every Muslim beware of these to the extreme. None escape from Allah's decree except those on whom He has mercy.

اللَّهُمَّ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ، نَسْأَلُكَ بِنُورِ وَجْهِكَ الْكَرِيمِ، أَنْ تَتَوَقَّأَنَا مُسْلِمِينَ، وَأَنْ تُلْحِقَنَا
بِالصَّالِحِينَ فِي عَافِيَةٍ، يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

“O the Most Merciful of all, we ask You by the light of Your Noble Countenance to cause us to die as Muslims and make us join the virtuous, in wellbeing, O Lord of the Worlds.”

Hold Firmly to Allah's Rope

He, Exalted is He, says, وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا.

“And together hold fast by the rope which Allah stretches out for you, and be not divided among yourselves.”¹

This verse is like a command to take refuge in Allah's religion, which is to uphold and conform to it steadfastly and be united in so doing. It is a command not to be divided in matters of religion, for union is mercy, whereas division is a hardship. Allah's hand is with those who are united, as he, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said.

This rise of this noble religion based on cohesion, mutual support and united intentions. Therefore, disunity and lack of cohesion in upholding it lead to its enfeeblement and weakness. It is thus clear that cohesion in religion is the basis of all good and success, whereas division is that of all evil and hardship.

Grateful on the Favour of Cohesiveness

He, Exalted is He, says,

وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ.

“And remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love.”²

¹ Surah 3 Alal Imran Verse 103.

² Surah 3 Alal Imran Verse 103.

This verse is a command to show gratitude to Him for the favour of harmony that Allah bestowed upon them, particularly after the ferocious hostility that had existed between the two tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj*. They subsequently became the Helpers of Allah [*Ansari*] and His Messenger; and that which had existed between the Arabs in general. They had been fighting and looting each other, in constant strife, until Allah raised his Messenger among them. Then Allah sent down His Book upon him, thereby uniting them and weaving bonds of friendship between their hearts, removing the enmity and rancor and the seditions and discords that had previously existed between them, so that they became, by His favour, brothers in His religion, in supporting His Messenger and revering His rites. Allah, Exalted is He, mention this in the context of pointing out His favours upon His Messenger may peace be upon him when He Exalted is He, says

هُوَ الَّذِي أَيْدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ. وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ.

“It is He that has strengthened you with His aid and with the company of the Believers; And moreover, He has put affection between their hearts: not if you had spent all that is in the earth, could you have produced that affection, but Allah have done it: for He is Exalted in might, Wise.”¹

Indeed, before Allah sent His Messenger to them, they had been on the brink of an abyss of fire, because of their disbelief in Allah and worship idols. Allah saved them from these by guiding them to His monotheism [*Tawhid*] and acts of obedience. Subsequently, Allah bid them be grateful and acknowledge the rights to Him for these favours bestowed to them, recognise how they were saved from error by His favour and how, having been so divided, they became united.

He also warned them against everything that may lead to division and discord after achieving union and harmony.

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ.

¹ Surah 8 At Taubah Verse 62-63.

“Thus, do Allah clearly show His signs to you, that they rightly guided you.”¹

Here it means that after being guided it will make you even more rightly guided as He, Exalted is He, says,

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ.

“For those who receive Guidance, He increases the light of Guidance, and bestows on them their Piety and Restraint from evil [*taqwa*].”²

Invite to do Good

And His, Exalted is He, saying, وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ .

“Let there arise out of you a band of people [*ummah*] inviting to all that is good.”³

Ummah here refers to a group of people [*jamaah*] calling on to Allah. Goodness [*khair*] is faith and obedience. Inviting others to this is a lofty rank in the sight of Allah and a powerful means to draw nearer to Him.

He, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى هُدًى كَانَ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ مِثْلُ أُجُورِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ ، غَيْرَ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْءٌ ، وَمَنْ دَعَا إِلَى ضَلَالَةٍ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ مِثْلُ آثَامِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ ، مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ آثَامِهِمْ شَيْءٌ .

“Whoever invites to right guidance will receive the same reward as much as those who respond to him, without this diminishing their recompense in any way; and he who invites to an error will receive the same penalties as the sin as those who respond to him, without this diminishing their sins in any way.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said, لَدَّلْ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ كَفَاعِلِهِ .

“He who guides to a good is equal to him who does it.”

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 103.

² Surah 47 Muhammad Verse 17.

³ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 104.

Thus, he who makes enjoining goodness his habit and main preoccupation, he has taken an ample share of the heritage of the Messenger of Allah's may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and trod his path, about which Allah, Exalted is He says,

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ.

“Say: “This is my way: I do invite to Allah, on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes, I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah! and never will I join gods with Allah!”¹

At all times, he, may blessings and peace be upon him, was only preoccupied with summoning to Allah, both with his words and his actions. His devotion is the reason Allah sent him, and this is what He commanded him to do. As He, Exalted is He, says,

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ إِلَيْهِ أَدْعُو وَإِلَيْهِ مَآبٌ.

“Say: “I am commanded to worship Allah, and not to join partners with Him. Unto Him do I call, and unto Him is my return.”²

Thus, the people nearest to the Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings, and peace be upon him, are closely connected with him in this world and the next, are those who are most concerned with this matter, most preoccupied with it, and most actively engaged in it. By this matter, I mean enjoining good, which is faith and obedience and forbidding their opposites, which are disbelief and sin.

Enjoin Good and Forbid Evil **[Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar]**

He, Exalted is He, says,

وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ.

“Enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong. It is those who attain felicity.”³

¹ Surah 12 Yusuf Verse 108.

² Surah 13 Ar Rad Verse 36.

³ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 104.

‘Felicity’ in this context is being the attainment of happiness in both this world and the next.

As for enjoining good and forbidding evil, they are among the greatest of religious activities, the strongest of Islam’s foundations, and the most important function of Muslims. By these affairs are straightened and everything runs in a goodly manner. People’s rights are lost, boundaries transgressed, truth disappears, and falsehood appears by neglecting them. Good in this context is very thing that Allah has enjoined upon His servants and likes them to do, while evil is everything that Allah dislikes them to do and likes them to avoid. Enjoining good and forbidding evil is an obligation and there can be no excuse for abandoning it.

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ.

“He who notices something reprehensible, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot act then with his words; if he cannot say then with his heart, and this would be the weakest degree of faith.”

And in another version narration, وَلَيْسَ فِي وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ.

“There is not an atom of faith for anything beyond this,” meaning beyond disapproving with the heart.

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيُوَقِّرْ كَبِيرَنَا، وَيَأْمُرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ.

“He is not one of us who shows no compassion to our little ones, nor reverence for our elders, who neither enjoins good nor forbids evil.”

And he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,

الَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، لَتَأْمُرَنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَلَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ، وَلَتَأْخُذَنَّ عَلَى يَدِ الظَّالِمِ أَوْ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ عِقَابًا مِنْ عِنْدِهِ.

“By He in Whose Hand my soul is, you should enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong and to confront the evil-doers or else Allah will soon send upon you His punishment.”

And he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِذَا هَابَتْ أُمَّتِي أَنْ تَقُولَ لِلظَّالِمِ: يَا ظَالِمُ فَقَدْ تُؤَدِّعُ مِنْهَا.

“If my nation is dumbstruck even to say to the evildoer: “O you Evildoer”, then the trust of Islam is deposed from them.” Meaning its good has expired, and its damnation has drawn close.

False Reasoning not to Enjoin Good and Forbid Evil

Allah, Exalted is He do not accept lame excuses and false justifications such as the people of our time use to justify their failure to enjoining good and forbidding evil. For example, they sometimes say “No one will accept this from us, whether we enjoin or forbid.” Or “Unbearable harm will come to us should we enjoin or forbid.” As well as other such things which are the illusory anxieties of those who have neither insight nor concern for Allah’s religion.

Indeed, silence is permitted when the occurrence of major harm or rejection is certain beyond doubt. However, even under such circumstances, enjoining good and forbidding evil is better and more appropriate, the difference being that it becomes no longer obligatory. The strange thing is that if one of them is insulted, or dispossessed of worldly assets, even of a little sum, the person becomes distressed and unable to keep quiet. At such a time, he produces none of those excuses which he uses at other times to justify keeping silent when faced with reprehensible things. Can this be explained or understood as other than that their honour and possessions are dearer to them than their religion?

If we concede that were they to enjoin good and forbid evil then we do not hear them, then what is it that drives them to mix with corrupt people and socialise with them, when Allah commanded them to avoid and shun them so long as they are not responding to Allah and His Messenger? Beyond doubt it is well known that those who witness

reprehensible things without disapproving of them when able to share the sin of those who approve of them, even if not present at the time, even were there as much distance between where they are and where these acts take place as between the East and the West. He who mixes and socialises with corrupt people, even if he refrains from joining in what they do, is considered by Allah to be one of them. Should punishment befall them, he will be afflicted along with them. The only route to safety is for him to disapprove of what they do and exhort them to desist, then, should they fail to respond and accept the truth, move away and avoid them altogether.

To love, for Allah's sake, those who obey Him, and to detest, for Allah's sake, those who disobey Him, are two of the strongest knots of faith. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, informed us when he said, "When the Israelites began to do wrong their scholars rebuked them, but they did not respond. They the scholars continued to socialise with them and share their meals. When they did, Allah cast hostility between their hearts and cursed them by the tongues of David and Jesus son the of Mary."

In the story of the Village that was by the sea, when they took to fishing on the Sabbath when it was forbidden, they divided into three groups. One group fished, doing did what Allah had forbidden, another refrained from fishing and rebuked them, but did not leave them, and a third having rebuked them, left them, moving away from them. When punishment came down, it befell the first two groups, the second for not having forsaken the first, even though they had not shared in the same wrong. Only the third group escaped punishment just as He, Exalted is He, says in this statement,

أَنْتَجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَذَابٍ بَئِيسٍ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ.

"We rescued those who forbade Evil, but We visited the wrong-doers with a grievous punishment as they were given to transgression."¹

Allah turned them into monkeys and cursed them, as in this verse,

¹ Surah 7 Al Ara'af Verse 165.

أَوْ نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ.

“Or that We curse them as We cursed those of the Sabbath.”¹

One should keep away from and avoiding sinful people should come only after having despaired of their accepting the truth.

Do Not Expose or Spy on Wrong-Doings.

You should know that people need not search for hidden reprehensible things so that he may forbid them, rather this is forbidden, for He, Exalted is He, says, “Do not spy!”² وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا.

And the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ يَتَّبِعْ عَوْرَةَ أَخِيهِ يَتَّبِعْ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ.

“He who seeks to expose his brother’s shameful secrets, Allah will expose his shameful secrets.”

What is obligatory is to enjoin good when one sees those who do wrong. Understand this, for we have seen many people erring in this matter.

It is important that you neither believe nor accept everything that is reported to you concerning reprehensible deeds or words till you witness them yourself for Allah-fearing, circumspect, truthful believer recounts them to you. Indeed, thinking well of Muslims is necessary, and people’s reporting each other’s misdeeds have become excessive. Carelessness and lack of concern in doing so have become the rule, and honesty has disappeared. A person is wrongly considered worthy of gratitude who approves of others’ desires, even when contrary to rectitude with Allah. While his action is blameworthy who disagrees with them, even were he to be a virtuous man.

Thus, you see them praising those who do not deserve it but who approve of their behaviour and keep silent about their wrongdoing but disparaging those who disapprove of their behaviour and counsel them to

¹ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 47.

² Surah 49 Al Hujuraat Verse 12.

improve their religion. Such action is the condition of the majority, except those whom Allah protects. It is important to be circumspect, reserved and careful in all things, for the times are times of sedition and its people have turned away from the truth, save those whom Allah will, and a minority they are.

Calling to the Truth Requires Good Manners

You should know that keeping to gentleness and gracious manners, as well as avoiding coarse and aggressive manners, are a major factor leading to others accepting the truth and submitting to it. Adhere to this with any Muslim you exhort to good or discourage from evil or counsel in any other way. Do it with tact, in private, gently, affectionately, for, as he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said and as Allah, Exalted is He, said to His Messenger,

فِيمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ.

“It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them, were you severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you.”¹

Avoid Dispute and Division

His, Exalted is He, saying,

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ.

“Be not like those who fell into division and fall into disputations after receiving Clear Signs.”²

The above statement is an interdiction from Allah to His believing servants to imitate those People of the Book who fell into division and discord concerning their religion. And those who fell into discord concerning their religion will suffer a formidable torment. It behoves you, may Allah have mercy upon you, to fear to the extreme a torment that Allah the Formidable calls formidable. Reflect upon it and save yourself from it by conforming to the Book and Sunna, avoiding errors, heresies [*bid'ah*], diverging opinions and whimsical inclinations.

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 159

² Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 105

Which Group will be Safe?

You should know that just as the People of the Book have divided and disagreed about their religion, so has this nation divided and disagreed. Just as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, had foretold when he said,

افْتَرَقَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى إِحْدَى وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً، وَافْتَرَقَتِ النَّصَارَى عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً، وَسَتَفْتَرِقُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً كُلُّهَا فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا فِرْقَةً وَاحِدَةً.

“The Jews divided into seventy-one sects, the Christians divided into seventy-two sects, and my community will divide into seventy-three sects, all of them in the Fire except one.”

Indeed, this community divided into the said number a long time ago and what the Truthful, the Trustee of Allah's revelation said would happen has already come to pass. When they asked him may blessings and peace be upon him about the one group whose destiny is to save, he replied,

الَّتِي تَكُونُ عَلَى مِثْلِ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي.

“Those who will conform to the example my Companions and I were.”

When disagreement happens, his, may blessings and peace be upon him, instructions are to keep with the great majority of Muslims. “The People of the *Sunna*”, praised be to Allah the Exalted, have remained the great majority of Muslims from the earliest days up to now. For this reason, it is well known that they are the Group to be Saved by the grace of Allah, for their adherence to the Book and *Sunna* and pattern of the virtuous predecessors who are the Companions and the followers may Allah be pleased with them all.

The Creed that Provides Safety

To continue, may Allah be praised and thanked, we are satisfied with Allah as our Lord, with Islam as religion, with Muhammad as Prophet and Messenger, with the Quran as the leader, with the Kaaba as Qibla, and with the believers as brothers. We renounce every religion that differs from the religion of Islam. We believe in every Book that Allah ever revealed, every Messenger He ever sent, His angels, destiny,

whether good or evil, the Last Day, and everything conveyed to us from Allah the Exalted by Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him. Upon this do we live and upon this shall we die and be resurrected Allah willing among those who will be secure, who will fear not, neither will they grieve, by Your favour, O Lord of the Worlds!

The Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings, and peace be upon him said,

ذَاقَ طَعْمَ الْإِيمَانِ: مَنْ رَضِيَ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا، وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا، وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيًّا.

“He has experienced the taste of faith whoever is satisfied with Allah as Lord, Islam as religion, and Muhammad as Prophet.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ قَالَ حِينَ يَصْبِحُ وَحِينَ يُمَسِّي ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ: رَضِيتُ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا، وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيًّا، كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَضْنُ يُرْضِيَهُ.

“Whoever says every morning and evening three times: “I am satisfied with Allah as Lord, Islam as religion, and Muhammad as Prophet,” Allah, without doubt, will satisfy him on Resurrection Day.”

You should know, O brothers, that he who is satisfied with Allah as Lord should of necessity be satisfied with Allah's management of his affairs and the choices Allah makes for him, including the bitter things which Allah may ordain. He should be content with whatever provision Allah allots him, remain obedient to Him, careful to perform what He made obligatory upon him and avoid what He forbade him. He should be patient when enduring His trials, thankful for His favours, desirous to meet Him, satisfied with Him as Patron, Ally and Guardian. He should be sincere in His worship, relying on Allah in both that which he can observe and that which is out of his view. He should seek no other help but His in times of difficulty and rely on none other than Him, Transcendent and Exalted is He, for the fulfilment of his needs.

One who is satisfied with Islam as religion reveres its rites and sacrosanct things and will persistently strive to acquire the kinds of

knowledge and perform the kinds of works which confirm it and increase it in stability and steadfastness. He should be happy with it, anxious for it not to be taken away from him, respectful of its people, and averse to those who deny or antagonise it.

One who is satisfied with Muhammad as Prophet should emulate him, follow his guidance, adhere to his law, uphold his *Sunna*, magnify his rights upon him, and abundantly invoke blessings and peace upon him. He should love his family and Companions, invoke Allah's mercy and satisfaction upon them, and be concerned for the Prophet's community [*ummah*] and of good counsel to them.

It is incumbent upon you, O believer, that you should impose upon yourself to realise all the above in full, for these meanings are all included in your saying, رَضِيتُ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا، وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيًّا.

"I am satisfied with Allah as Lord, with Islam as religion and with Muhammad as Prophet."

You should strive to acquire those attributes and not be content with merely reciting them, for this is of little benefit, although not entirely devoid of it. You must do the same for all other invocations and supplications that you use. Impose upon yourself to realise their meanings and acquire them so to make them your attributes.

For example, when you say, "Transcendent is Allah!" (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ!) your heart should be full with the magnification of Allah and awareness of His Transcendence.

And when you say, Praise belongs to Allah, (الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ!) your heart should be full of praises and thanks for Allah, Exalted is He.

And when you say, "I ask Allah to forgive me! (رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي!) it should be at the same time full of hope for Allah's forgiveness, yet fearful of His not granting it; and so on.

Strive for presence with Allah, reflect on the meanings of what you say, and do your best to acquire the behaviour He likes and avoid that which He dislikes.

Purify Your Heart

Concentrate on your inward aspect, your heart, for the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورَتِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ، وَإِنَّمَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَنِيَّاتِكُمْ.

“Allah looks not at your outward forms or your actions, but He looks at your hearts and your intentions.”

So, you must affirm your words with your acts, your actions with your intentions and your sincerity, and your intentions and sincerity by purifying your inward and reforming your heart. For the heart is the essential thing upon which everything else depends. A hadith narration stated,

أَلَا إِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْعَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ.

“There is in the body a lump of flesh when it is good the whole body is good, but when it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt, it is the heart!

Therefore, it is a duty to attend to it and concentrate on making it sound and upright. The heart is quick to turn around and excessively restless, to the extent that, may blessings and peace be upon him, said

إِنَّهُ أَسْرَعُ تَقَلُّبًا مِنَ الْقَدْرِ إِذَا اسْتَجْمَعَتْ عَلَيْهَا.

“It is quicker to turn around than a cooking pot as it boils.”

Often, he, may blessings and peace be upon him invoke in prayer,

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ.

“O You Who turns hearts around, make my heart steadfast in Your religion.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ الْقُلُوبَ بَيْنَ إِصْبَعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ الرَّحْمَنِ، إِنْ شَاءَ أَقَامَهَا وَإِنْ شَاءَ أَرَاغَهَا.

“Indeed, the hearts are held by the two fingers of the Most Merciful. Allah keeps them upright when He so will, and Allah makes them astray when He so wills.”

And when he wished to give weight to an oath, he said,
“No, by He Who turns hearts around.” لَا مُقَلِّبِ الْقُلُوبِ.

Allah, Exalted is He, tell about Abraham, may peace be upon him, His Intimate Friend, says,
وَلَا تُحْزِنِي يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُونَ. يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ. إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ.
“And let me not be in disgrace on the Resurrection Day. “The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail. “But only he will prosper that brings a sound heart to Allah.”¹

So, do your very best, may Allah have mercy on you to come to your Lord with a heart that is free of idolatry, hypocrisy, heresy, and reprehensible traits of character such as arrogance, ostentation, jealousy, deceitful behaviour toward Muslims, and soon. Seek Allah’s help and be patient. Strive in earnest and repeat often,

رَبَّنَا لَا تُرِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ.
“Our Lord!” (they invoked), “Let not our hearts deviate now after You have guided us but grant us mercy from Your Presence; for You are the Grantor of bounties without measure.”²

For this is how Allah has described those of His believing servants who have firm and steep knowledge.

Do Not Allow Your Heart to be Hard and Heedless

You should beware of hardness, which is for the heart to become so coarse and callous that it is no longer affected by counselling and neither softens nor is sensitive to the mention of death, of promises and threats, or the events of the hereafter.

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
أَبْعَدُ الْأَشْيَاءِ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى الْقَلْبُ الْقَاسِي.
“The most remote from Allah, Exalted is He, is a heart that is hard.”

¹ Surah 26 Ash Shuraa Verse 87 – 89.

² Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 8.

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مِنْ الشَّقَاءِ أَرْبَعٌ: قَسْوَةُ الْقَلْبِ وَجُمُودُ الْعَيْنِ وَالْحِرْصُ وَوَطُولُ الْأَمَلِ.

“Four signs of wretchedness are the hardness of the heart, dryness of the eye, extreme greed, and long hopes.”

You should be aware of these four traits. In another narration,

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبَلُ دُعَاءَ مَنْ قَلْبٍ غَافِلٍ.

“You should know that Allah does not accept the prayer from the distracted and heedless heart.”

The Heedless heart is of lesser importance than hardness. It is nevertheless blameworthy and may induce extreme harm. The heedless heart is that which does not awaken and become attentive when exposed to counsels or rebukes. It does not take them seriously, being so distracted and forgetful, so engrossed in its playthings and trivia, in the attractions of his worldly life and the pursuit of his passions.

Allah Exalted is He, said to His Messenger may blessings and peace be upon him,

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ.

“And do you (o dear reader!) bring your Lord to remembrance in your soul, with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not of those who are unheedful.”¹

He thus forbade him to be one of the heedless. He also forbade him to obey, listen or follow to those heedless.

He, Exalted is He, says,

وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرْطًا.

“And do not obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds.”²

¹ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 205.

² Surah 18 Al Kahfi Verse 28.

It is to be distracted to read or listen to the Noble Quran, but neither reflect upon it, nor attempt to understand its meanings, neither obey its injunctions, nor its prohibitions, and neither accept its counsels, nor it rebukes. The same applies to the traditions of the Messenger of Allah, may blessings and peace be upon him and the discourses of the virtuous predecessors, may Allah be pleased with them.

It is to be distracted not to remember death often, as well as what comes after it, the conditions of the blessed and those of the wretched, and not to dwell on these at length.

It is to be distracted not assiduously to keep company with those who know Allah and His religion, which reminds of His days, His graces, His promises and His threats, who exhort, with both words and deeds, to His obedience and to avoiding disobedience. Those who are unable to find such people should make up for that by reading their books. However, Allah willing the earth will never be entirely devoid of them, even when corruption is rife and falsehood and its champions dominate, when everyone has turned away from Allah and from supporting the truth, except those whom Allah-wills, and they are very few. The Prophet may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا تَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي ظَاهِرِينَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ خَالَفَهُمْ، حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ.

“There shall remain a group in my nation, successfully upholding the truth, no harm can befall upon them by those who oppose them, until the arrival of Allah’s Command.”

The Pure Heart – Free from Evil and Wrong-Doings

There are more Prophetic and other traditions indicating that the earth will never be without a group of the people of truth, upholding the Book of Allah the Exalted and the Sunna of His Messenger may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and exhorting others to do so. But their numbers will dwindle to the extreme at the End of Time. Furthermore, they may hide their status to remain unknown and unreachable, except for true seekers and sincere devotees. Allah Exalted is He knows best.

You should know, O brother, may Allah confirm you and us that the best of hearts, the most loved by Allah, is that which is clean and pure

of falsehoods, doubts, and all other evils, and receptive to the truth, right guidance, and all that is good and correct.

In a Prophetic narration:

الْقُلُوبُ أَرْبَعَةٌ:

قَلْبٌ أَجْرَدٌ فِيهِ سِرَاجٌ يُزْهِرُ فَذَلِكَ قَلْبُ الْمُؤْمِنِ، وَقَلْبٌ أَسْوَدٌ مَنكُوسٌ فَذَلِكَ قَلْبُ الْكَافِرِ، وَقَلْبٌ مَرْبُوطٌ عَلَى غِلَافِهِ فَذَلِكَ قَلْبُ الْمُنَافِقِ، وَقَلْبٌ مُصَفَّحٌ فِيهِ إِيْمَانٌ وَنِفَاقٌ، فَمَثَلُ الْإِيْمَانِ فِيهِ مَثَلُ الْبَقْلَةِ يَمُدُّهَا الْمَاءُ الْعَذْبُ. وَمَثَلُ النِّفَاقِ فِيهِ مَثَلُ الْفَرْحَةِ يَمُدُّهَا الْقُبْحُ وَالصَّدِيدُ فَأَيُّ الْمَادَتَيْنِ عَلَيَّتْ عَلَيْهِ ذَهَبَتْ بِهِ.

“There are four types of hearts: A clean heart without any crooked suspicions, in it, contains a luminous lamp; this is the heart of the believer. A debilitating black heart, one that turned upside down, this is the heart of the disbeliever. A shackled heart to its skin, this is the heart of the hypocrite. Another is a heart made of layers, containing both faith and hypocrisy. The likeness of faith in it is that of a plant fed by freshwater; while the likeness of hypocrisy in it is that of an ulcer, fed by discharge and pus. Whichever substance overpowers the other takes over the heart.”

In my opinion, it appears that this last kind of hearts is that of those common Muslims who are neglectful and mix good with evil behaviour.

In another prophetic narration,

إِنَّ الْإِيْمَانَ يَبْدُو فِي الْقَلْبِ لَمْعَةً بَيَضَاءَ ثُمَّ تَزِيدُ حَتَّى يَبْيَضَ الْقَلْبُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِنَّ النِّفَاقَ يَبْدُو فِي الْقَلْبِ نُكْثَةً سَوْدَاءَ ثُمَّ تَزِيدُ حَتَّى يَسْوَدَّ الْقَلْبُ كُلُّهُ.

“Indeed, Faith appears in the heart like a shiny white spot until it illuminates the whole heart to becomes white. Hypocrisy appears in the heart as a blackspot until it engulfs the whole heart to be black.

نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ وَالْوَفَاةَ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ لَنَا وَلِلْمُسْلِمِينَ.

We ask Allah for safety and to die as Muslim, for us and all Muslims.

Faith increases by persevering in good works in abundance and with sincerity towards Allah.

As for hypocrisy, wrong-doings increases by, such as abandoning religious obligations and committing prohibited acts.

As the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him said,
مَنْ أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا نُكِبَتْ فِي قَلْبِهِ، نُكِبَتْهُ سَوْدَاءٌ، فَإِنْ تَابَ صُفِّلَ قَلْبُهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَتُوبْ زَادَ ذَلِكَ حَتَّى يَسُودَ قَلْبُهُ.

“He who sins, a black spot is inscribed in his heart. If he repents, his heart is relburnished, but if he does not, it spreads until it covers the whole heart.”

Here is the veil about which Allah Exalted is He says,

كَأَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ.

“By no means! but on their hearts is the stain of the wrong-doings which they do!”¹

Nothing is more harmful to man, in this world and the next than sins. Almost no evil nor harm befall them except due to these.

Allah, Exalted is He, says,

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ.

“Whatever misfortune happens to you, is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many of them, He grants forgiveness.”²

Therefore, it is incumbent that a believer should be wary of sins to the extreme and ever remain as far away from them as possible. Should he commit one, immediately, he must repent to Allah, Exalted is He, for He accepts the repentance of His servants, pardons evil deeds, and knows what you do.
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُوبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ.

“And those who do not repent are indeed doing wrong and unjust.”³

They have done themselves an injustice by falling into sin, then persisting in it by not repenting as Allah has commanded them while

¹ Surah 83 Al-Mutaffifin Verse 14.

² Surah 42 As Shuraa Verse 30.

³ Surah 49 Al Hujuraat Verse 11.

promising them to accept it. For Allah, Exalted is He, describes Himself thus, **غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَهُ الْمَصِيرِ**.
 “Who forgives sin, accept repentance. Who is strict in punishment, and have a long reach in all things, generously, there is no god, but He: to Him is the final goal.”¹

Reflect on this verse, may Allah have mercy on you, the noble meanings and subtle secrets it contains, which arouse fear and hope, desire and awe, among other things.

وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ. فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ.

“But only those receive admonition who turn to Allah. Then call you, upon Allah with sincere devotion to Him, even though the Unbelievers may detest it.”²

The Best, Pure and Gentle Heart

Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah honour his countenance, said, Allah possesses receptacles in the earth, these are the hearts. The best are the purest, firmest and gentlest. Then he explained this by saying, The purest in certainty, the firmest in religion, and the gentlest toward other believers.

I said, certainty is for faith to take over the heart with firmness until the heart is in tranquillity, just as Abraham, may peace be upon him, asked of his Lord, as related in the Quran,

قَالَ أَوْلَمْ تُؤْمِن؟ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّ لِيْطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي.

“He (Allah) replied, “Have you no faith?” He said, “Yes, but just to reassure my heart in tranquillity.”³

Thus, it is clear that certainty is the goal and final result of faith. In a prophetic narration,

“Certainty is the whole of faith.” **الْيَقِيْنُ هُوَ الْإِيْمَانُ كُلُّهُ.**

¹ Surah 40 Ghaarif Verse 3.

² Surah 40 Ghaarif Verse 13 – 14.

³ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 260.

Nothing was sent down from heaven nobler than certainty. Certainty is sufficient to make one independent.

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,

سَلُوا اللَّهَ الْيَقِينَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ، فَإِنَّهُ مَا أُوتِيَ أَحَدٌ بَعْدَ الْيَقِينِ أَفْضَلَ مِنَ الْعَافِيَةِ.

“Ask Allah for certainty and safety. Indeed, there is nothing better than safety after certainty given to a person.”

As for firmness in religion, it is strength therein, steadfastness, and being so concerned about it to speak the truth always even when bitter and never fear to be blamed when acting for the sake of Allah. These characteristics are how Allah describes those He loves. He says,

يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ.

“They strive in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault.”¹

You should also read the earlier verses.²

And this is how the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him describes Umar ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with Him, when he said,

أَفْوَاهُهُمْ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ عُمَرُ، قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ، وَمَالُهُ فِي النَّاسِ مِنْ صَدِيقٍ.

“The best among you in Allah’s religion is Umar. He speaks the truth, and the truth has left him with no friends among people.”

Among believers, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of the staunchest as concerns Allah’s religion, one of the strictest in

¹ Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 54.

² Surah 5 Al Maidah Verses 53: “And those who believe will say: “Are these the men who swore their strongest oaths by Allah, that they were with you?” All that they do will be in vain, and they will fall into nothing but ruin. Verse 54: “O ye who believe! if any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him, humble with the believers, mighty against the rejecters, **striving in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault.** That is the grace of Allah, which He will bestow on whom He please. And Allah encompass all, and He know all things.”

applying it to himself and others. So much so that he became an example for justice, enjoining good, forbidding evil, and imposing the truth upon those close with him and far or oppose to him. May Allah be pleased with him and in general with all Companion of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him.

As for gentleness toward believers, it is to show compassion and solicitude for them. It is one of the noblest characters and most superior attributes. Thus, Allah described His Messenger, saying, لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ. "Now has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves: it grieves him that you should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful."¹

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said, الْكَرَّحُمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَمَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ لَا يُرْحَمُ. "Those who have mercy on others, the All-Merciful will have mercy on them, and those who have no mercy, receive no mercy."

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, also said, إِنَّ أَبْدَالَ أُمَّتِي لَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ بِكَثْرَةِ صَلَاةٍ وَلَا صِيَامٍ بَلْ بِسَلَامَةِ الصُّدُورِ، وَسَخَاوَةِ النُّفُوسِ، وَالرَّحْمَةِ بِكُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ.

"Indeed, the leaders of divine religion and worshippers [*Abdals*] in my community will not enter the Heaven by their great amount of prayers and fasting, but by pure hearts, generous souls, and compassion for all Muslims."

I should say that you should not misunderstand the above. Nor think that the *Abdals* are not praying and not fasting nor performing all other kinds of good deeds in abundance. But that these attributes with which the Prophet of Allah may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, described them qualified for being the foremost in approaching Allah.

¹ Surah 9 At Taubah Verse 128.

And the nearest to Him, because of the nobility and superiority of these attributes over the other kinds of good deeds they perform, for these are acts of the hearts and qualities of the secrets, sounder stand!

Deeds of the Heart Verse Physical Worship

You should know that an act of the heart never weighed against physical worship, whether good or evil, without the act of the heart outweighing it. It is through this that the Sufis acquire their superiority, for they are more intent on purifying their hearts and more concerned with the attributes and good works of the heart, whereas other Muslim worshippers and scholars are not as intently concerned with the inward. Favours is in Allah's Hand, He bestows them upon whom He will, and Allah is Vast, Knowing.

Compassion towards Muslims

Compassion for Muslims is a duty and an incumbent right, but for the weak, the destitute, and the afflicted it is even more of a duty and a priority. He who does not find in him self pity and compassion when faced with the weak and the afflicted among Muslims, his heart is hard, overcome with callousness, deprived of compassion. Only he who is wretched is deprived of compassion, as the Prophet has said may blessings and peace be upon him.

If such illuminates man is also arrogant, haughty, and disdainful of the weak and the destitute among Muslims, then may he be crushed, expelled, and loathed by God! For the harbours that which will inevitably have him expelled from Allah's doorstep and will be one of the arrogant who opposes Allah, Exalted is He.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ .

“He whose heart contains as much as a mustard seed of arrogance will not enter the Garden.”

Cry Out of Fear of Allah

It is part of being gentle and soft-hearted to feel humility in the

heart and cry abundantly in fear of Allah. Fear is a noble attribute and praiseworthy endeavour. Thus, has Allah described His Prophets and the virtuous among His servants. He, Exalted is He, say,

إِذَا تَتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا.

“When recited to them the signs of the All-Merciful they fall prostrate, weeping.”¹

He, Exalted is He, says, وَيَخْرُونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا.

“And they fall on their faces in tears, and it increases their earnest humility.”²

The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, mentioned this category of people is among the seven types that will be shaded by Allah in His shade on the day when there will be no other shade.

رَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ خَالِيًا، فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ.

“A man who remembers Allah when alone till his eyes overflow in tears.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

كُلُّ عَيْنٍ بَاكِئَةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا عَيْنٌ بَكَتْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَعَيْنٌ بَاتَتْ تَحْرُسُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.

“All eyes will cry on the Day of Resurrection except, one that has wept for fear of Allah and one that observes the night vigil for the sake of Allah [fisabillillah].

Crying solely from the fear of Allah is so precious as to have this rank in the sight of Allah, even though so many people cry. To the extent that he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَلْبِغُ النَّارَ مَنْ بَكَى مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَعُودَ اللَّبَنُ فِي الضَّرْعِ، وَحَتَّى يَلْبِغَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخَيْاطِ.

“He who weeps for fear of Allah will never enter the Fire until milk shall return into the adder, and until the camel can pass through the eye of the needle.”

¹ Surah 19 Maryam Verse 58.

² Surah 17 Al Israa' Verse 109.

In another prophetic narration,

مَنْ حَرَجَ مِنْ عَيْنِهِ مِثْلَ رَأْسِ الذَّبَابِ مِنْ حَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ.

“Who has tears coming out from his eye as small as the heads of flies for fear of Allah.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, even made weeping for fear of Allah equal to the blood spilt in the way of Allah.

It has been transmitted, لَوْ أَنَّ بَاكِيًا بَكَى فِي أُمَّةٍ لَرَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِبُكَائِهِ.

“If there is one in a community that cries, Allah would have mercy on all of them because of his weeping.”

From the previous, there are many types of crying. However, crying in fear of Allah is an infrequent occurrence. So, you should cry for fear of Allah. If you are unable to cry, make as if you do. But beware of mixing your deeds with ostentation, pretending, and showing off in front of other created beings, thus, you will fall from consideration in the sight of the Lord of the Worlds.

Crying in Reflection of the Day of Ressurrection

If you find it difficult to weep, remember what awaits you of the terrors of the life to come, which you will unavoidably, without any doubt, encounter. Without any doubt, that is if you believe in Allah and what Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, has brought. Inevitably you shall weep if you have a heart that understands and an intelligent mind. If you possess neither of those then count yourself among the cattle roaming their pastures and enjoying their fodder.

For Allah, Exalted is He, addresses only those possessed of hearts and reminds them when He says,

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ.

“Verily in this is a Message for any that has a heart and understanding or who gives ear and earnestly witnesses the truth.”¹

And He says Exalted is He,

¹ Surah 50 Qaf Verse 37.

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ.

“Here is a Book which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may reflect on its Signs, and that men of understanding may receive admonition.”¹

And in another section of the Quran, وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“And none will grasp the Message but men of understanding.”²

These are men of intelligence and understanding. See how Allah denies others the ability to take heed to the message.

Allah, Exalted is He, also attributes the ability to take heed to those who are ever turning to Him, to those who fear and thus afraid of Him, and those who have faith and truly believe in Him and His Messenger, His promises, and His threats.

Thus He, Exalted is He, say,

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ.

“He Who shows you His Signs, and send down sustenance for you from the sky: but only those receive admonition who turn to Allah.”³

And He says Exalted is He, فَذَكِّرْ إِنْ نَفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى. سَيَذَكَّرُ مَنْ يَحْشَى.

“Remind! There are benefits in reminding. He will take heed who fears.”⁴

And He says Exalted is He, وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

“And remind, for reminding benefits the believers.”⁵

Allah prescribed reminding, commanding His Messenger to remind all people, but restricted its benefits to the believers among His servants, making it proof in their favour before Him and a road to approach Him. As for others, it will be proof against them, destroying their false arguments. For they turned away after knowledge had come to

¹ Surah 38 Sad Verse 29.

² Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 269.

³ Surah 40 Ghafir Verse 13.

⁴ Surah 87 Al Alaa Verses 9 – 10.

⁵ Surah 51 Adh Adhriyat Verse 55.

them, denied after being made aware of the truth, and failed to respond to Allah and His Messenger.

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكِنَّةٍ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَفِي آذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَمِنْ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَأَعْمَلْ
إِنَّنَا غَامِلُونَ.

“They say, “Our hearts are under veils, concealed from that to which you do invite us, and in our ears is deafness, and between you and us is a screen: so do as what you will, for us, we shall do what we will!”¹

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ لَّيَكُونُنَّ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْ إِحْدَى الْأُمَمِ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
نَذِيرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا.

“They swore their strongest oaths by Allah that if a warner came to them, they would follow his guidance better than any other of the nation. But when a warner came to them, it has only increased their flight from righteousness.”²

The above described those who were called upon by his Lord, through His Messenger, to ascribe oneness to Him and obey Him, but he refused arrogantly, denied, and disbelieved. He who believes outwardly and verbally but denies inwardly, he is a hypocrite. He deserves as much wrath and cursing from Allah as the open disbeliever.

The Danger of Committing Sins

He who believes outwardly with his tongue and within his heart but neglects what Allah has imposed upon him in the way of obedience, and commits what He has forbidden him, he is in extreme danger. If Allah does not save him by granting him to repent sincerely before death, he is at risk of joining the ranks of the hypocrites and disbelievers and becoming their companion in Allah’s blazing Fire, which rises to the hearts. It closed upon them, in outstretched pillars.

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْفُودَةُ. الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ. إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّؤَصَّدَةٌ. فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ.

¹ Surah 41 Fussilat Verse 5.

² Surah 35 Fathir 35 Verse 42.

“It is the Fire of the Wrath of Allah kindled to a blaze which does mount right to the Hearts: It shall be made into a vault over them in columns outstretched.”¹

O believer! Be steadfast, in obeying your Lord. Make your acts of obedience frequent, patiently persevere and be sincere in doing so. Then continue and persist until you meet Him, Majestic and High is He. By which time He will satisfy you, be pleased with you and you, and admit you to His Abode of Honor.

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ أُكُلُهَا دَائِمٌ وَظِلُّهَا تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَعُقْبَى الْكَافِرِينَ النَّارُ.

“The parable of the Garden which the righteous is promised, beneath it flow rivers: perpetual is the enjoyment thereof and the shade therein: such is the end of the Righteous and the end of Unbelievers in the Fire.”²

Compulsory to Repent Immediately

O believer who disobedience, if you sin, repent to your Lord immediate from it before death overtakes and you will meet your Lord in a filthy and vile condition. Then you will be as Allah. Exalted is He, says, إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى.

“Verily he who comes to his Lord as a sinner at Judgment, for him is Hell: therein shall he neither die nor live.”³

Never feel secure, should you not hasten to repent from your disobedience, for Allah may send down some punishment upon you, for the disobedient to their Lord are ever exposed to that. Have you not heard Allah, Exalted is He, saying

أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ. أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقْلُبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ. أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَى تَخَوُّفٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ.

¹ Surah 104 Al Humazah 6 – 9.

² Surah 13 Ar Rad Verse 35.

³ Surah 20 Ta Ha Verse 74.

“Do then those who devise evil plots feel secure that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them up, or that the Wrath will not seize them from directions they little perceive? Or that He may not call them to account in the midst of their goings to and fro, without a chance of their frustrating Him? Or that He may not call them to account by process of slow wastage for your Lord is indeed full of kindness and mercy.”¹

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا يَا كَرِيمَ بَتَدَكِّيرِكَ مُنْتَفِعِينَ، وَلِكِتَابِكَ وَرَسُولِكَ مُتَّبِعِينَ، وَعَلَى طَاعَتِكَ مُجْتَمِعِينَ، وَتَوْفَقْنَا يَا رَبَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ وَالْحَقُّنَا بِالصَّالِحِينَ، وَوَالِدَيْنَا وَأَحْبَابِنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ.

O our Lord, O Generous One, cause us to benefit from Your reminding, to follow You and Your Messenger, to unite in obeying You, O our Lord, to die as Muslims, and to join the virtuous, grant the same to our two parents and all our loved ones, by Your mercy, O Most Merciful!

The Danger of Long Hopes

You should know, O dear brothers may Allah awaken our hearts and yours from the slumber of distraction. And grant us all success in preparing for the passage from the ephemeral to the permanent abode that long hopes are among the most noxious things to a man.

The meaning of long hopes or ambitions is to think that residence in this world will be so prolonged that this feeling overcomes the heart, which response by behaving accordingly. The virtuous predecessors may Allah have mercy on them have said, “He whose hopes are long, his deed will spoil, because long hopes lead to over preoccupation with this world and strenuous efforts to improve one slot in it. Until the point is, reached when a person spends his whole time, night and day, thinking on how to improve it and acquire more. He will pursue this, now inwardly within his heart, and now outwardly by physical action, till both his heart and whole body become involved in pursuing this world. Then he will forget the life to come, being occupied elsewhere, and will postpone doing anything for it. He will thus be diligent and earnest in worldly matters, and neglectful and procrastinating in what concerns his life to come. The

¹ Surah 16 An Nahl Verses 45 – 47.

correct guide would have been for him do the opposite and strive in earnest for his life to come, which is the abode of permanence, the place of residence.

Allah, Exalted is He, and His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, have informed him that he will not attain to it without effort and persistence in deadly earnest.

As for this world, it is a place of change and perishing. Soon the man will leave it for the hereafter, abandoning it behind. He is not commanded to desire and work for it, on the contrary, he is told not to in the Book of Allah the Exalted and the Sunna of His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him. Allah's appointed of your share of it will not miss you, even you were not to work for it. However, when his hopes become long, they lead him to concentrate on this world and neglect the next.

Whenever the thought of death occurs to him, or that he ought to be preparing himself for it with good deeds, here he decides to do so sometimes in the future or once he can free himself from working for this world, as if it was his to decide when to die. A result of the evil consequence of long hopes, so beware of them, may Allah have mercy on you and remove these delays, postponements and procrastination because of worldly matters, while start dealing with those of the hereafter immediately and resolutely.

As the Prophet may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَعْمَلْ لِدُنْيَاكَ كَأَنَّكَ لَا تَمُوتُ أَبَدًا، وَأَعْمَلْ لِآخِرَتِكَ كَأَنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ غَدًا.

“Work for your worldly lives as if you think you will never die and strive for your Hereafter as if you will die tomorrow.”

You should feel that death is soon, just as mentioned in a prophetic narration,

أَقْرَبُ عَائِبٍ يُنْتَظَرُ. “(Death) is the nearest hidden thing, lying in wait.”

Man does not know that it may be only very little lifetime remains, yet he is attending to this world and forgetful of the hereafter.

Should he die in this state, he will return to Allah unprepared to meet him. He might then wish for the reprieve, but that will never be. As He, Exalted is He, says,

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ. لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ.

“Until, when death comes to one of them, he says, “O my Lord! send me back to life, so that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected.” “By no means! It is but a word he says.” Before them is a Partition till the Day they are raised.”¹

Only a fool who is prey to illusion harbours long hopes, procrastinates, and neglects to prepare for death. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ، (يَعْنِي حَاسِبَهَا) وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ، وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ أَتْبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا، وَتَمَتَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ الْأَمَانِي.

“He is sagacious who brings his soul to reckoning and works for what comes after death, and he is inadequate who follows his passions and harbours illusory hopes in Allah.

Thus, ambitions or long hopes are but part of following the passions of one’s soul and being deceived by its false hopes.

One of the virtuous predecessors, may Allah be pleased with them, said, “Were you to witness the end and how it approaches, you would detest hope and its deceptions”. Another said, “How many a man began his day but never ended it or hoped in tomorrow he never saw. Another said, “man may be laughing heartily, yet his coffin has already left the bleacher’s shop. A prophetic narration reported,

يَنْجُو أَوَّلُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ بِالرُّهْدِ وَالْيَقِينِ، وَيَهْلِكُ آخِرُهَا بِالْجُرْصِ وَطُولِ الْأَمَلِ.

“The first to succeed in this nation will be by detachment and certainty, while the last will perish through love for wealth and long hopes.”

¹ Surah 23 Al Mu’minun Verse 99 – 100.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “The thing I fear most for you is that you follow passions and have long hopes. As for following passions, it repels one from the truth; and as for long hopes, they make one forget the hereafter. The one who forgets the hereafter does not work for it, he who does not work for it reaches it a bankrupt of good deeds, and there is neither salvation nor gain in the hereafter without them. Should one seek to be returned to this world at that time to do these good deeds, the person will be prevented from doing so. Then his remorse and sorrow will be immense, at a time when remorse will avail nothing.

When the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, counselled ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with both of them, he said,

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ غَائِرٌ سَبِيلِ

“Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a wayfarer.”

The above exhortation is powerful, indeed, to shorten one’s hopes and curb one’s desire for this world.

Ibn Umar said, “When you wake up in the morning do not expect the evening and when evening comes do not expect morning. Take from your life for your death and from your good health for your sickness.”

Categories of Ambitions

You should know that there are three categories of people with regards to their ambition or hope.

The first consists of the Foremost, namely the Prophets and the Righteous. They harbour no hopes at all, for they are ever aware of the imminence of death, always prepared for it by their unbroken concentration on Allah and obedience to Him. They are utterly unconcerned with worldly matters except that which is strictly necessary, whether for their selves or those of their followers for whom they are responsible. They are so intent on Allah and the Last Abode that was one of them to be told, “You are to die tomorrow! He would be unable to increase his good works, for he would already have reached the maximum possible in these; he would also need to refrain from nothing since he has long since abandoned everything that he would have disliked

death to find him doing. To such a noble state does the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, referring to them said,

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا رَفَعْتُ قَدَمِي فَظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي أَضَعُهَا حَتَّى أَقْبِضَ، وَلَا رَفَعْتُ لُقْمَةً فَظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي أُسَيِّعُهَا حَتَّى أَعْصَ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَوْتِ.

“By He in whose hand my soul is, never when my eyes blink do I think they will be able to close again before I die. Never when I lift my gaze do I think I will be able to lower it again, and never do I eat a morsel of food thinking I will be able to swallow it before death makes me choke on it.”

Sometimes he, may blessings and peace be upon him, took ablution [*wudhu*] with earth purification [*tayammum*] when water was not far away from him. When asked about it, he said,

“I do not know! If I will reach it.” لَا أَذْرِي! لَعَلِّي لَا أَبْلُغُهُ.

The second category consists of those superior and righteous people who are in the middle course. They harbour short hopes which do not distract them from Allah and His remembrance, do not make them forget the Hereafter and do not be too occupied to be able to prepare for death. They do not overly engage in improving and embellishing their worldly things or be deceived by whatever ephemeral blemished beauty or pleasures it has to offer.

However, they are not given as much strength as the first category in uninterruptedly feeling the imminence of death. Were this state to persist with them, some of the requirements of their worldly life may be compromised. They may even see some of their next world's exigencies compromised as well. They may become so overcome by the awesomeness. The constant awareness of the imminence of death is a formidable matter that only the strength of Prophethood or perfect righteous can sustain.

Sometimes it is due to this awareness; it then implied that some hopes are mercy. These are the hopes without which the affairs of both this world and the next would be disturbed. The situation refers to that

which concerning the progeny of Adam, may peace be upon him when Allah the Exalted brought them out of Adam's loins on the Charter Day whereby they pledged their submission to Allah. When the Angels, seeing how numerous they were, said,

“Our Lord, the world will not accommodate them!” يَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَسْعُهُمُ الدُّنْيَا!

Allah, Exalted is He, then said, “I intend to create death.” إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ مَوْتًا.

The Angels said, “They will never live happily.” لَا يَهْمُوهُمْ الْعَيْشُ.

Allah said, “I intend to create hope.” إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ أَمَلًا.

And the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ يَقُولُونَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَيِّتِ إِذَا انْصَرَفُوا عَنْ قَبْرِهِ. انْصَرَفُوا إِلَى دُنْيَاكُمْ، أَنَسْكُمْ اللَّهُ مَوْتَاكُمْ.

“The angels say to the relatives of the dead person as they walk away from his grave, return to your worldly affairs that Allah may cause you to forget your dead!”

The Angels may peace be upon them are not asking for evil to befall the believers, namely blameworthy long hopes, but good, namely short hopes of the kind that do not distract from the hereafter yet just enough for the fulfilment of the exigencies of life. And Allah knows best.

The third category consists of those people labouring under illusions and other fools. Those who harbour such long hopes that they make them forget the hereafter, distract them from the remembrance of death and make their hearts love this world, intent on making it prosper and amassing its debris. They are deceived by its beauties and ornaments, gazing at its attractiveness. These Allah forbade him, may blessings and peace be upon him, when He, the Exalted say,

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ.

“Nor strain your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to parties of them, the splendor of the life of this world, through which We test them: but the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring.”¹

You will see how such a person seldom remembers the hereafter or reflects on it, nor does death and the imminence of his endeavour occur to him. On the rare occasions when they do, they have no effect on his heart, and when he fears that they will, he drives them away and replaces them with whatever may help him forget them, so as not to disturb his avidity for this world and enjoyment of its pleasures and appetites. [syahwat]

This kind of ‘hope’ is unconditionally blameworthy. Anyone who harbours such hopes is one of the losers who have been distracted by their possessions and children from the remembrance of Allah. When death comes, and he beholds the hereafter, he says, My Lord, if only You would relieve me a little. As Allah, Exalted is He, informs us in His Book, يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ. وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ، فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ. وَلَنْ يُؤَخَّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهَا وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ.

“O you who believe! Let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. If any act thus, the loss is their own. And spend something in charity out of the substance which We have bestowed on you, before Death should come to any of you and he should say, “O my Lord! Why did You not give me respite for a little while? I should then have given largely in charity, and I should have been one of those who do good”. But to no soul will Allah grant respite when the time appointed for it has come, and Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do.”²

¹ Surah 20 Ta Ha Verse 131.

² Surah 63 Al Munafiqoon Verse 9 – 11.

It is said that the Angel of Death, [*Izrail*] may peace be upon him, appears to the person whose time is near to inform him that this is so. When the person says, “O Angel of Death, relieve me a little that I may repent to my Lord and ask His forgiveness!”

He replies, “You have been left and granted to live for so long, yet you never repented nor turned back to your Lord till now. Now the time is over, and you have reached your appointment that Allah has ordained for you, it is no longer possible further to relieve you.”

Scholars, may Allah have mercy on them, have said, “Should this person own the whole world, and were it possible for him to buy one extra hour in exchange for it to prolong his life sufficiently to be able to make amends with his Lord, he would do so.”

Forgetfulness of the hereafter and its symptoms is to attend entirely to this world to the exclusion of the next. Neglecting the hereafter is due to long hopes, as we have mentioned before, or it may be because one doubts the hereafter and hesitates to accept that it is true, may Allah protect us from this, for it is disbelief in Allah and His Messenger. Distinguish the person who is forgetful of the hereafter because of long hopes from he who is doubtful of its existence. When he falls ill, or something else happens to him that may lead to death, the first remember the hereafter all the time, experiences remorse for not having worked for it, and wishes to recover from being able to do some good works. As for the one whose forgetfulness of the hereafter is due to doubt, none of this will show on him when he falls ill, he will only feel sorrow for leaving his worldly life, anxiety for the fate of his children and wealth after him, and other such things indicating short-sightedness and desire for this world. Watch for signs of this in yourself, may Allah have mercy on you. Also, watch for them in others so that if you notice evidence of their doubting the hereafter, you may counsel and advise them. For although long hopes are reprehensible enough, doubting the hereafter is even more reprehensible and more dangerous.

Remember Death Frequently

You should know that the frequent remembrance of death is a

good thing and to be encouraged. It brings important benefits and profits, among which are short hopes, detachment from the world, contentment with little, and desire for the hereafter accompanied by gathering provision of good works in preparation for it. The Messenger of Allah may blessings and peace be upon him, said, أَكْثَرُوا مِنْ ذِكْرِ هَازِمِ اللَّذَاتِ.

“Remember the killer of pleasures frequently.” (meaning death).

May blessings and peace be upon him, used to rise at night, and call out to the people, جَاءَ الْمَوْتُ بِمَا فِيهِ، جَاءَتْ الرَّاجِفَةُ تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّدْفَةُ.

“Death has come with all its terrifying package. The first blast shivers, to be followed by the promise of resurrection.”

And when he, may Allah’s blessings be upon him, was asked about who the perspicacious among people were, he answered,

أَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْمَوْتِ ذِكْرًا، وَأَحْسَنُهُمْ لَهُ اسْتِعْدَادًا أُولَئِكَ الْأَكْيَاسُ ذَهَبُوا بِشَرَفِ الدُّنْيَا وَنَعِيمِ الْآخِرَةِ.

“Those who remember death most often, and who prepare for it best. Those are perspicacious. Theirs is honour in this world and a noble rank in the next.”

I say: For a person to benefit, the remembrance of death should not be for a person to repeat, “Death, Death!” For this is of little benefit, even if abundant, rather this should be accompanied by the presence of the heart and reflection on what will one’s state be when death comes with its terror and throes, when one begins to see the things of the hereafter? How long is one to live yet, and how shall one’s life be concluded? How did one’s peers and those of his companions who preceded him do at the time of death? To which condition have they gone? And other similar reflections and reminders which are likely to influence the heart profitably.

One of our ancestors said, “Observe, anything that you do that you would be pleased for death to come to you while doing it, keep to it; but anything that you do and would detest death to find you doing it,

avoid it! Reflect on these words, may Allah have mercy on you, for they are of immense benefit for he who would act accordingly.

Success and help are from Allah; there is no other Lord than He.

As for disliking death, it is a normal thing that almost no man can avoid. As death is painful in itself and separates a person from everything, he loves or is familiar within his world. When the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ. وَمَنْ كَرِهَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ.

“He who loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him, and he who detests meeting Allah, Allah detests to meet him.”

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said to him, “O Messenger of Allah, but we all dislike death!”

He said, may blessings and peace be upon him,

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا حَضَرَ الْمَوْتُ بُشِّرَ بِرَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ، فَأَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ وَأَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَإِنَّ الْكَافِرَ إِذَا حَضَرَ الْمَوْتُ بُشِّرَ بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ فَكَرِهَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ وَكَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ.

“Indeed, when death comes to the believer, he is given glad tidings of his Lord's mercy, thus loves to meet Allah and therefore Allah loves to meet him. And when death comes to the disbeliever, he is given tidings of Allah's torment and wrath, he thus detests to meet Allah, and therefore Allah detests to meet him.”

Also, in the description of the beloved believer mentioned in the hadith *Qudsi* beginning with,

مَا تَقَرَّبَ الْمُتَّقِرُونَ، “My servant draws nearer to Me.”

And continued until He, Exalted is He, say,

وَمَا تَرَدَّدْتُ فِي شَيْءٍ أَنَا فَاعِلُهُ كَتَرَدُّدِي فِي قَبْضِ نَفْسِ عَبْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِ، يَكْرَهُ الْمَوْتَ وَأَكْرَهُ مُسَاعَاتَهُ وَلَا بُدَّ لَهُ مِنْهُ.

“Never do I hesitate in doing anything more than My hesitation in taking the soul of My believing servant, for he dislikes death, and I dislike to

displeased him. However, death must surely happen to him.”

See how He describes him as disliking death although his faith is complete and his rank with Him, Exalted is He, is high, you will then grasp the truth of what we said earlier.

There is also the episode in the narration of Moses, may peace be upon him, where he strikes the Angel of Death who had come to take his soul knocking his eye out.

But yes, the dawning of the lights of gnosis and certainty may overflow upon the feeling of dislike of death such that there is no feeling. It occurs to those who are qualified at certain times, but not at others. The general rule for all believers is that they like death. Death leads to their meeting with Allah and journeying to the abode of permanence, having left this world which is the place of temptations and hardships; yet they dislike death because it is in the nature of the soul to do so, because of the pain that accompanies it and the separation from loved things. However, the stronger one's faith is, the less this dislike will be, and the less allowance will be given to the nature of the soul and vice versa. Be aware of this! May Allah take guardianship over your guidance!

Long Life

A long life in the service of Allah is desirable and sought after, just as he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ طَالَ عُمُرُهُ وَحَسَنَ عَمَلُهُ.

“The best of you are those who have a long life and good deeds.”

The longer a lifetime is in the service of Allah, the more good deeds accumulated and the higher the status achieve. On the other hand, long life in disobedience is a calamity and an evil, for the bad works will abound and sins will multiply.

Someone may claim that he wishes to live long in this world so that he may increase the good deeds that will draw him nearer to Allah, Exalted is He. If he is careful not to neglect them, eager to pursue them and to avoid those worldly things which may distract him from them, he

is probably truthful in his claim. But if he is lazy in pursuing good deeds and postponing them regularly, then he is a liar who will keep producing false excuses that will avail him nothing, for he who wishes to live for a certain purpose is expected to be most careful never to miss any of it or allow himself prevent from fulfilling it. Especially so since good deeds are only possible in this world are inconceivable elsewhere. The hereafter is a place of reward, not of action. Reflect well upon this, that Allah may make you benefit from it. Ask for Allah's help and be patient, strive earnestly, hasten to good deeds before there comes a time when you are incapable of performing them, make the best you can of your time before the end overtakes you unaware! You are prone to ailments, a target for the arrows of death. Your capital, with which you can buy perpetual happiness from Allah, is but your life. Beware of spending your moments, days, hours, and breaths in that which is of no benefit, devoid of good, for your regrets will be prolonged and your grief after death immense, once you realise with certainty how much you have missed.

In the hereafter, the narration stated that the report of each man's night made of twenty-four closets showed to him. Those hours which occupied with service to Allah will fill with light, those occupied with disobedience will be filled with darkness, while those where neither obedience, nor disobedience took place will be empty. When he looks at the empty closets, he will become filled with regrets for not having filled them with light by acts of obedience.

But when he looks at those fill with darkness, at that moment were it possible for him to die of regret and grief he would have died, but there is no death in the hereafter.

He who has acted in obedience to Allah will constantly be joyous and satisfied, his joy and happiness increasing as days pass by. But he who has disobeyed Allah will be distressed and aggrieved. His distress and grief are increasing endlessly. So choose for yourself, may Allah have mercy on you, since you are still in the place of choice, that which will benefit and elevate you, for once you die you lose all choice.

The Danger of Postponing Obedience

Make haste, postpone not, for procrastination is evil since human beings are liable to suffer from various problems and become occupied with numerous things.

He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

اِعْتَمِنِ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ: شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ، وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ، وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكَ، وَغَنَّاكَ قَبْلَ فَقْرِكَ، وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ.

“Make the best of five before five: of your youth before your senility, of your health before your illness, of your free time before you become occupied, of your affluence before you become poor, and of your life, before you die.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

بَادِرُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ الصَّالِحَةِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُشْغَلُوا وَصِلُوا الَّذِي بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ رَبِّكُمْ بِكَثْرَةِ ذِكْرِكُمْ لَهُ.

“Hasten to good deeds before you become too occupied and strengthen the bond between you and your Lord by abundantly remembering Him.”

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him,

نِعْمَتَانِ مَعْبُودٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ: الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ.

“Many people are deprived of two graces that are good health and free time.”

Here the meaning of “deprived” is that after being bestowed the two favours, health and free time, yet they use these in distractions and idle endeavours, or in struggling for worldly things that distract them from remembering Allah and from good works. They only realise been deprived once they die and witness the high status that they could have attained if they used their health and free time to reach a higher degree.

Ali, may Allah honour his countenance, said, “People are asleep, once they die they awaken.”

And Allah, the Exalted, say, يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّعَابِينِ.

“The Day that He assembles you all for a Day of Assembly, that will be a Day Deprivation, a Day of mutual loss and gain among you.”¹

The Prophet may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَيْسَ يَتَحَسَّرُ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ إِلَّا عَلَى سَاعَةٍ مَرَّتْ بِهِمْ، لَمْ يَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِيهَا.

“The only regrets the people of the Garden shall experience shall be those for each moment they had spent in the world without remembering Allah.”

When they witness how much proximity and bliss they have missed because of the moments of distractive, then they regret.

As for he who uses his health and free time in sinful activities and things which attract Allah’s wrath, he is a loathsome loser and not merely deprived. The latter is one who was deprived because he used these favours in idle rather than forbidden activities. Deprivation in the context of good health and free time may also mean that one is not granted them, to begin with, either because one is afflicted with illness or weakness, or because of his too many occupations. Because of this, he is unable to perform the good deeds with the healthy and free time available to perform. Understand here the meaning of His, Exalted is He, saying,

وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“And Allah preferred those who strive and fight above those who sit at home by a special reward.”²

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْمُؤْمِنُ الْقَوِيُّ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ وَفِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ، فَاحْرِصْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَاسْتَعِزْ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ، فَإِنْ غَلَبَكَ أَمْرٌ فَقُلْ قَدَرَ اللَّهُ وَمَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ فَعَلَ، وَإِيَّاكَ وَاللَّوْ فَإِنَّ اللَّوْ تَفْتَحُ عَمَلَ الشَّيْطَانِ.

“The strong believer is better and more liked by Allah, the Exalted, than the weak believer, and in each there is good. So, pursue the care that

¹ Surah 64 Taghabun Verse 9.

² Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 95.

which will profit you and do not be feeble. If you are overcome by something, say, “Allah has ordained, and what He wishes He does.” Beware of ‘if only’ for ‘if only’ allows in the work of the devil.”

I say: This is because ‘if only’ is usually said by a lazy feeble person who, because of his laziness and feebleness, misses doing good deeds when they are within his grasp. It’s also said by he who depends on his power and ability, his effort and planning, thinking that by his alertness and caution he will escape what Allah has decreed is to happen to him. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“No amount of caution will avail against destiny.” لَا يُبْنِي حَدَرٌ مِنْ قَدَرٍ .

Reflect on this and meditate on it thoroughly for it has a profound meaning, and underneath it is abundant knowledge. To Allah, do all things return.

Hope for Forgiveness without Good Deeds.

As for hopes of forgiveness and admission to the Garden without having done anything for it, namely doing what a believer was commanded to do, hastening to good deeds, avoiding forbidden things, and refraining from evil deeds, such hopes are but foolishness, self-deceit and alliance with the Devil. May Allah curse him! By accepting his fraudulent and deceitful incitements, his peddling to people evil disguised as good.

Allah, the Exalted say,

وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُّبِينًا. يَعِدُهُمْ وَيُمَنِّيهِمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا.

“Whoever, forsaking Allah, takes the Devil [*Satan*] for a friend, have of a surety suffered a manifest loss. The Devil makes them promises and creates in them false desires, but the Devil’s promises are nothing but deception.”¹

Thus whoever thinks that he may sin, not repent to Allah with sound repentance, think that He, Exalted is He, will forgive him. And

¹ Surah 4 An-Nisaa Verses 119-120.

whoever neglects acts of obedience and is too occupied with worldly affairs to attend to them, yet imagines that nevertheless Allah will honour him and raise him in good status in the Garden along with those whose behaviour was superior, he is a self-deluded incapable fool.

For indeed, Allah, Exalted is He, say, and his words are the truth,
وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ
أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَى.

“Indeed, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: so that He rewards those who do evil, according to their deeds, and He rewards those who do good, with what is best.”¹

Then Allah, the Exalted, describes those who did well by saying that they are,
الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ. إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ.

“Those who avoid major sins and shameful deeds, only falling into small faults, verily your Lord is vast in forgiveness.”²

Lesser faults are the minor sins that almost no man can be entirely free. Allah the Exalted also says,

أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ
كَالْفُجَّارِ.

“Shall We treat those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, the same as those who make mischief on earth? Or shall We treat those who are mindful of their duties to Allah and fear Him [*taqwa*], the same as those who turn aside from the right or Infidel?”³

Meaning: We shall never make them equal in Our sight, neither in this world nor the next. Just as He, the Exalted, also says,

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً
مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ.

¹ Surah 53 An-Najm Verse 31.

² Surah 53 An-Najm Verse 32.

³ Surah 38 Saad Verse 28.

“What! Do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds, that equal will be their life and their death? Ill is the judgment that they make.”¹

Here He declares false their calculations and illusions and blames them for thinking that they and those who do good might ever be considered equal in the sight of their Lord.

In His Book Allah attributes to His angels and His Prophets, may peace be upon them, and His believing servants the qualities of performing good works, persevering in them, and hastening to them, together with fearfulness, awe, and anxiety. Concerning the angels, He, the Exalted say,

بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ. لَا يَسْئَلُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ. يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ وَهُمْ مِّنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ.

“They are, but servants raised to honour. They speak not before He speaks, and they act in all things by His Command. He knows what is before them, and what is behind them, and they offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable, and they stand in awe and reverence of His Glory.”²

And concerning the Prophets, He, the Exalted says,

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا.

“Those whom they call upon do desire a means for themselves access to their Lord, even those who are nearest: they hope for His Mercy and fear His Wrath: for the Wrath of your Lord is something to take heed of.”³

Concerning them, He, the Exalted, also says,

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْحَيَرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ.

¹ Surah 45 Al-Jaathiya Verse 21.

² Suruh 21 Al-Anbiyaa Verses 26 – 28.

³ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 57.

“Indeed, they were ever quick in emulation in good works; they used to call on Us with love and reverence, and humble themselves before Us.”¹

Concerning the believers, He, the Exalted say,

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَاءً وَذِكْرًا لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ. الَّذِينَ يَحْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ
وَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُونَ.

“In the past, We granted to Moses and Aaron the criterion for judgment and a Light and a Message for those who would do right [*taqwa*], Those who fear their Lord in their most secret thoughts, and who hold the Hour of Judgment in awe.”²

Concerning them, He, the Exalted, also says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّشْفِقُونَ. وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ. وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
لَا يُشْرِكُونَ. وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجَلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ. أُولَٰئِكَ يُسَارِعُونَ
فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ.

“Verily those who live in awe for fear of their Lord; Those who believe in the Signs of their Lord; Those who join not in worship partners with their Lord; And those who dispense their actions with their hearts full of fear, because they will return to their Lord; It is these who hasten in every good deed, and those who are foremost in them.”³

Once Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, concerning the Exalted saying,

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجَلَةٌ

“And those who dispense their charity with their hearts full of fear.”⁴

Whether the reference was to someone committing adultery or stealing, then being afraid? He replied, “it is the man who prays, fasts and gives charity, then fears Allah will not accept these deeds from him.”

¹ Surah 21 Al Anbiyaa Verse 90.

² Surah 21 Al Anbiyaa Verse 48 – 49.

³ Surah 23 Al Mu’minun Verse 57 – 61.

⁴ Surah 23 Al Mu’minun Verse 60.

As for His enemies, Allah attributes to some of them self-deceit and illusory hopes when He says, وَلَئِنْ رُدِدْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا. “Even if I am brought back to my Lord, I shall surely find there something better in exchange.”¹

Referring to his garden which he admired so much, forgetting Allah’s favour when He gave it to him. He felt so proud for owning it that he bragged about it to humble another servant of Allah who was a better man than he. You can look this up in the story of this man and of the virtuous servant beginning with His saying, وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَحَفَفْنَاهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا.

“Set forth to them the example of two men: for one of them We provided two gardens of grape-vines and surrounded them with date palms; in between the two We placed corn-fields.”²

Another of His deluded enemies said,

وَقَالَ لَأُوتِيَنَّ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا. “I shall surely be given wealth and children!”³

Meaning in the hereafter, Allah gave him the lie and threatened him with His torment. To another of them, Allah the Exalted says,

وَلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَىٰ.

“But if I were returned to my Lord, I shall have near Him a most excellent reward.”⁴

Now consider may Allah have mercy on you how Allah describes His loved ones, His friends, and those He loathes, His enemies. Of the two groups, the one you emulate and imitate is that which you will join, for as has been transmitted, he who imitates certain people is one of them.

¹ Surah 18 Al Kahf Verse 36.

² Surah 18 Al Kahf Verse 32.

³ Surah 19 Maryam Verse 77.

⁴ Surah 41 Fussilat Verse 50.

It must have become clear to you that Allah's angels, Prophets, and virtuous servants hasten to acts of goodness, persevere in them, avoid sins and bad deeds, and are in fear and awe of Allah. And that His enemies are at the opposite of that, they disobey, abandon excellence, harbour illusions, feel safe from Allah's lures, and harbour false hopes in Him. Choose for yourself which of the two groups company is preferable, then emulate them in deeds and attributes, you shall thus join them Allah willing.

The Danger in Hoping for Forgiveness But Lazy in Good Deeds

You should know that hopes of forgiveness accompanied by laziness and wasting time are of the most noxious issue a person may have. They are heard widely from the confused people of these times. For this reason, we have discoursed on them at length in the hope that by Allah may present guidance [*taufiq*] to those of them who read it. So that they may abandon their distraction and awaken from their slumber. They should know and realise that Prophets and virtuous people experience great fear from Allah, to the extent that our Prophet Muhammad may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَوْ أَخَذَنِي اللَّهُ أَنَا وَابْنُ مَرْيَمَ بِمَا جَنَّتْ هَاتَانِ (يَعْنِي السَّبَابَةَ وَالْإِبْهَامَ) لَعَذَّبَنَا ثُمَّ لَمْ يَظْلِمْنَا شَيْئًا.

“Were Allah to bring us to reckoning, I and the Son of Mary, for what these two (meaning the thumb and index finger) have done He would punish us, and that would not be an injustice.”

There is no doubt that Prophets and virtuous people are more aware than others of Allah, His immense generosity, and His vast mercy, then it behoves the confused and the neglectful to be much more fearful, in every possible manner and all situations.

Harbouring Empty Hopes is No Excuse.

And you should know that the arguments of whoever harbour false hopes and deceives himself is refute with the greatest ease. If the person says, “Allah, Exalted is He, is neither harmed by my sins nor does

He profit from my acts of obedience, He is in no need of me or my deeds.” Then say to him, “True, but sins harm you and acts of obedience profit you. It is you who need good deeds.” Then say to him, “Abandon your efforts to earn a living, do nothing, strive not for your sustenance, for Allah Exalted is He, has guaranteed your provision for you, and in His grip are the treasures of the heavens and earth.” When he says to you, “True, but one must strive and act. There is nothing obtained without an effort.” Say to him, “This world that Allah commands you to renounce forbids you to desire, and guarantees you your needs from it, is still only to be obtained with effort and action. The hereafter which, on the contrary, Allah encourages you to desire and commands you to pursue, He informs you in His Book and through the words of His Prophet that you will only escape His torment and gain His reward only by striving for it and expending effort to obtain it. We observe you neglecting it, not paying it any attention. You either are one who doubts or a self-deceived fool. You have turned things upside down and placed things where they do not belong by using that argument. How will you dare meet Allah and His Messenger, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him whom He sent to you to invite you to prefer the hereafter to this world?” At this, his argument will be destroyed, and he will be at a loss, not knowing what to say.

When Faith is Strong Fear Increase

You may Allah have mercy on you should know that the stronger one’s faith and the better one’s deeds, the greater one’s fear will be; and the weaker one’s faith and the worse one’s deeds, the less one’s fear will be. The more likely one is to feel secure and deceive oneself. Observe this in yourself and others, and you will see how evident it is.

In general, the true believer is he whose deeds are good and sincere, and he hopes it will be accepted and rewarded by Allah’s favour. He will also avoid sins, steer away from them. Lest he may be afflicted with them, fear being chastised for those he has already committed and hope to be forgiven by Allah once he has repented and turned to Him. A believer who does not fulfil these conditions is one who is confused and

is in great danger. Understand this and impose upon yourself its fulfilment so that Allah willing you will be saved and will have won.

Seek Allah's Mercy After Doing Good Deeds

You should know that the sign of good fortune is that in his lifetime, the servant is granted success [*taufiq*] in performing good deeds and rendered easy for him. On the other hand, the sign of wretchedness is that they not be rendered easy for him and that, furthermore, he is afflicted with evil deeds. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

اعْمَلُوا فَكُلُّ مَيْسَرٍ لِمَا خُلِقَ لَهُ، مَنْ خُلِقَ لِلْجَنَّةِ يُسَّرُ لِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَنْ خُلِقَ لِلنَّارِ يُسَّرُ لِعَمَلِ أَصْهْلِ النَّارِ.

“Deeds for each person rendered easy that for which he was created. He who was created for heaven, to him the deeds of the people of heaven will be rendered easy, while he who was created for hell, to him the actions of the people of hell will be rendered easy.”

When Allah grasped the two fistfuls, He said to the fortunate of the two, these are for the Garden and the deeds of the people of the Garden they shall do. He said to the fistful of wretched ones, and these are for the Fire and the works of the people of the Fire they shall do.

You should know that the believer possessed of discernment in religion, well steeped in knowledge and certainty, is he who excels in his deeds for the sake of Allah, exerts his utmost, then depends on Allah and His grace, not on his deeds and brilliancy. Thus, were the Prophets, the scholars and the virtuous among the old and the recent generations may peace, mercy and satisfaction be upon them. He may Allah's blessings, and peace be upon him, referred to this balance when he said,

لَنْ يَدْخُلَ أَحَدُ الْجَنَّةِ بِعَمَلِهِ، قَالُوا: وَلَا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: وَلَا أَنَا، إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَّعَمِدَنِي اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَتِهِ.

“None shall enter the Garden by his deeds.” They asked, “Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Not even I, save that Allah envelopes me in His mercy.”

And he, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, strove to his utmost in good deeds till his feet swelled up because he stood up for so long during his night prayers.

He who strives in earnest in good deeds then depends on them, is guilty of self-admiration and impudence toward his Lord. He may very well be put to trial so that he may come to realise his powerlessness and inability to do anything good without Allah's favour and mercy.

Just as He, the Exalted say,
وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُرِكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ.

“Had it not been for Allah's favour upon you and His mercy, none of you can ever be purified. But Allah purifies whom He will; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”¹

A narration stated that a certain devotee worshipped Allah for five hundred years. Then on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will say to him, “O my servant, enter the Garden by My mercy!” He will answer, “O Lord, by my deeds.” Allah will then order him to face the reckoning. He will be shown the worth of the grace of eyesight and will find that it outweighs all his devotions put together so that nothing will be left to balance the numerous other divine graces he had enjoyed. He will then order to the Fire. At which point, he will say, “O Lord, admit me to the Garden by Your mercy!” Allah will then order to send him to the Garden, at which he will praise and laud Him Majestic and High is He.” It is now clear that two things are necessary. The first is to make one's deeds good, while the second is to depend on Allah, not on one's deeds.

How excellent are the words of the Reviver of the Religion, [Shaykh Muhyiddin] Abdul Qadir al-Jalani, may Allah be pleased with him, “By You we do not arrive, yet You are indispensable.” Meaning that effort only without Allah's favour is ineffective, yet the effort is indispensable in submission to Allah's orders.

¹ Surah 24 An-Noor Verse 21.

Shaykh Abu Said al'Kharraz, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "He who thinks he can arrive (to Allah) by his deeds, he is overburdening himself. But he who thinks that without deeds he will arrive he is deceiving himself. The self-deceiver is he who does nothing, yet claims he depends on Allah's favour." This attitude is nothing but illusion and foolishness, for he is permitted to depend on Allah and His favour only after having expended the necessary effort.

Hasan al-Basri, may Allah's mercy be upon him said, "Hopes of forgiveness have deceived some people so much that they left this world bankrupt". This meaning 'Bankrupt' of good deeds. And he also said, "The believer joins excellence in works with fear, while the hypocrite joins evil deeds with security".

I say, "This is strange indeed, for he whose deeds are evil is more worthy of fear since he thus exposes himself to Allah's chastisement. He feels secure, although his works are evil because his heart is upside down and his inner eye is blind so that he is devoid of insight,

مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّمْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا.

"He whom Allah guides is rightly guided; but he whom Allah leaves to stray, for him you will find no ally to lead him to the Right Way."¹

﴿اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنَا وَكُنْ لَنَا يَا رَبَّنَا وَلِيًّا مُرْشِدًا إِلَى مَا تَحِبُّهُ مِنَّا، وَتَرْضَى بِهِ عَنَّا.﴾

﴿فَقَدْ فَوَضَّأْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَمْرَنَا، وَتَوَفَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ وَأَلْحَقْنَا بِالصَّالِحِينَ.﴾

O our Lord! Guide us and be our guiding ally, lead us to what pleases and satisfies You! We have entrusted our fate to You.

Make us die as Muslims and join the virtuous.

Belief in Pre-Determination and Destiny

As for using predestination as an argument, as many common Muslims do who are misled by the Devil, it is extremely perilous. When one of them neglects some duties or commits forbidden things, and he is asked, "Why did you do this? Why did you contravene Allah's

¹ Surah 18 Al Kahf Verse 17.

injunctions and His Messenger's?" He answered, "It was predestined to do so; it had already been written and decided."

Thinking thereby that he has justified himself, escaped all blame, and argued successfully against Allah the Exalted, to whom belongs the most conclusive arguments against all His creatures in all situations.

لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ.

"Allah cannot be questioned for His actions, but they will be questioned for theirs."¹

I say the argument of this sinner is a greater crime than his sin and more harmful to him in both this world and the next. For the implications of this argument indicate that it's holder harbours beliefs that shake the very foundations of his religion. Why should this sinner repent, why should he regret his loathsome behaviour, when he perceives himself as coerced and forced to behave thus, without any choice on his part nor ability?

The argument above is precisely the belief of the heterodox [*Jabariyya*] sect, who preach that there is no free choice exists. They were a group of innovators in religion. The *Mu'tazilites*, on the other hand, another heterodox sect, teach the opposite and also an innovator of religion. The belief of the people of truth, the people of the Prophetic Way and the main Congregation [*Ahlul Sunnah wal Jamaah*] is a middle position between these two strayed groups. As a certain scholar once said, "It comes out (as Allah the Exalted described),

مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبْنَا حَالِصًا سَائِعًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ.

"between excretions and blood, We produce, for your drink, milk, pure and agreeable to those who drink it."²

The belief of *Ahlul Sunnah* may Allah make us of them by His favour is that:

¹ Surah 21 Al Anbiyaa Verse 23.

² Surah 16 An Nahl Verse 66.

- No event be it small or large occurs except by the Allah's, the Exalted, His decree [*qada*], His Decision [*mashiya*], His Will [*irada*], and His Power [*qudra*]. All of His servants and their actions, whether good or evil, are created by Allah's Exalted is He.
- After which all creation should demand of themselves complete obedience to Allah's commands. And seek no excuse for neglecting any of them. They should also demand of themselves that they refrain from all that is forbidden and avoid it altogether.
- Should they fall into any of it, they hasten to repent and ask Allah's forgiveness Exalted is He.
- When they neglect any of their duties, they hasten to requite it and repent to Allah, the Exalted, for neglecting it.
- They never use the argument of predestination against Allah, nor do they use it to attempt to justify their misdeeds, nor do they permit anyone else to do so.

Allah, Exalted is He, describes some of His foes in His Book as using the argument of predestination. He follows this by disparaging and reprimanding them, rejecting their argument, then accusing them of uttering falsehoods.

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى دَافُوا بِأَسْنَاءِ قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ. قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ.

“Those who give partners to Allah will say, “If Allah had wished, we should not have given partners to Him nor would our fathers; nor should we have had any taboos.” So did their ancestors argue falsely, until they tasted of Our wrath. Say, “Have you any certain knowledge? If so, produce it before us. You follow nothing but conjecture. You do nothing but lie.” Say, “To Allah belongs the conclusive argument.”¹

¹ Surah 6 Al Anam Verse 148 – 149.

And in the other verse,

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا عَبْدْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَحْنُ وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَهَلْ عَلَى الرُّسُلِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ.

“The worshippers of false gods say, “If Allah had so willed, we should not have worshipped apart from Him, neither we nor our fathers nor should we have prescribed prohibitions other than His.” So, did those who went before them. But what is the mission of messengers but to preach the Clear Message?”¹

So, beware of imitating the polytheists in arguing against Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!

Believe in Predetermination [*Takdir*]

It should suffice for you to believe in predetermination, whether good or bad. Having done so, impose upon yourself to obey Allah’s orders and avoid His prohibitions. Be constantly repentant for not being able fulfilled His rights, seek His Help, and depend on Him, Exalted is He. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said

“When destiny is mentioned, keep silent.” إِذَا ذُكِرَ الْقَدَرُ فَأَمْسِكُوا.

He thus forbade delving into it because of the perils and excessive harm that may come from this.

Once, a man asked Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, about destiny. He replied, “It is a deep-sea, so do not enter it; and a dark road, so do not travel it. It is the secret of Allah, the Exalted, which is hidden from you, so do not seek to unravel it.

And once a man of eminence asked Muhammad ibn Wasi, may Allah have mercy on him, about destiny. He replied, “To reflect upon your neighbours who are in their graves, should be sufficient to keep you so occupied as not to think about destiny.

The predecessors [*salaf*] and their successors among the people

¹ Surah 16 An Nahl Verse 35.

of truth have all believed in destiny, good and evil, and have agreed on this by consensus, may Allah have mercy on them, and on refraining from using it as an argument when they neglect duty or commit something forbidden. They saw this as one of the worst evils. If you belong to the people of truth, emulate them and follow their way. Should you not do this, you have already heard how Allah, Exalted is He, addressed those who took a path other than that of the believers. Hear it again now. Allah, the Exalted say,

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ
وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا.

“If anyone contends with the Messenger even after guidance has been conveyed to him and follows a path other than that becoming to men of Faith, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell, what an evil refuge!”¹

You should know, may Allah have mercy on you, that it is not permissible for a believer to believe within himself that he will not be blamed, nor will he be held responsible if he neglects a duty or commits a forbidden thing since he is vanquished by predestination.

Then based on this, when he does something wrong or omits some duties which displease Allah, and he uses predetermination as an argument to excuse himself, when he still retains his faculties of discrimination, free choice and decision, he would be burdening himself with calumny and manifest sin.

I am afraid this affliction has spread among people to the extent of reaching some who are supposedly knowledgeable and virtuous. The sign that they are thus afflicted is that no great pain or regret appear on them when they commit something that is legally blameworthy. Let every believer who notices some of this in himself fear Allah, then make an effort to rid himself of it, and know that Allah will accept and retains his ability to choose. Should you ever hear this worthless argument used by a Muslim, rebuke him and inform him that his sin in using such an

¹ Surah 4 An-Nisaa Verse 115.

argument is greater than his sin in neglecting, duty or committing a forbidden thing. He should, therefore, fear Allah and avoid burdening himself with two calamities rather than one, thereby exposing himself to Allah's wrath in two ways rather than one.

As a Lesson from Trials and Tribulations

It is permissible to speak of destiny and reminding others of it when hardships, afflictions, and misfortunes strike. Since it is an argument against the ego, not for it. For the afflicted servant who is suffering hardship, when he remembers that it is his Lord who has afflicted him, that He has compassion for him, that this hardship was decreed by Allah, Exalted is He, he becomes certain that there will be much good and benefit in it. The knowledge of this will allow him to accept it and surrender the matter to Allah, the Wise, the Omniscient.

It is now clear that using destiny as an argument when legal injunctions are in question is forbidden and blameworthy, so beware of this! But when hardship strikes, it is beneficial, if only to those who understand what Allah, the Exalted wish them to. He the Exalted says, مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن نَّبْرَأَهَا. إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ. لِّكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ.

“No misfortune can happen on earth or to you but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence. That is truly easy for Allah. So that you may not despair over matters that you have missed, nor rejoice over the favours bestowed upon you. For Allah loves not any, who is proud and boastful.”¹

For the servant afflicted by misfortune, to remember Allah's promises of high degrees and good things and forgiveness of sins is a good thing that is of benefit for most Muslims and easy for them to understand. To reflect on eternal knowledge and pre-existent destiny and decrees needs sagacity and insight such as most people lack.

¹ Surah 57 Al-Hadid Verse 22 – 23.

On the other hand, promises and threats concerning the hereafter are easy for everyone to understand.

For this reason, is reminding of promises and threats of widespread benefit, both when one is engaged in acts of obedience, when one is committing a sin or when one is afflicted with hardship. Another reason why you see the Book of Allah; Exalted is He and the Sunna of His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, full of promises and threats, and exhortations containing reminders of both. Understand this and reflect on it; you will thus be wisely guided.

﴿فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾

﴿وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ﴾

“Rely on Allah, for He likes those who rely on Him.”¹

There is neither power nor ability save by Allah,
the Most High, the Most Formidable.

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 159.

Chapter Two

Knowledge

You should know, O brothers, may Allah bestow upon us and your wellbeing and certainty, and make us tread the paths of the god-fearing that it is incumbent upon every Muslim man and woman to seek knowledge. No Muslim can excuse from this. The knowledge in question is that without which faith and religion cannot be sound. In sum, it is the knowledge of Allah, His Messenger, the Last Day, what is obligatory, and what is forbidden. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said, طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ.

“Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, also said, اطْلُبُوا الْعِلْمَ وَلَوْ بِالصِّينِ.
“Seek knowledge, even if in China?”

China being an extremely distant region to which very few people go because it is so remote. If a Muslim is required to seek knowledge even in such a remote place, how will it not be required when he lives among scholars and will not incur much expense nor suffer much hardship seeking it?

As for the sciences of Islam, they are included in the Messenger of Allah's may blessings and peace be upon him, answer to Gabriel [*Jibril*], peace be upon him, when he asked him in the famous hadith, “Tell me about Islam? And he replied,

الإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ، وَتَحُجَّ الْبَيْتَ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا.

“Islam is to testify that there is no god other than Allah and that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger, to perform the ritual prayer, expense out the Zakat, fast Ramadan, and go to the House on pilgrimage when able to.”

He then asked, “Now tell me about Faith [*Iman*].” He replied, الإِيْمَانُ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ، وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَالْكِتَابِ، وَرَسُولِهِ، وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، وَالْقَدَرِ حَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ.

“Iman is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His Messengers, the Last Day and predetermined, whether good or evil.”

That which it is incumbent on every Muslim to know regarding the science of faith [*Iman*] is to be found in the concise expositions of beliefs produced by leading scholars for the common Muslim. An example is the Creed of *Iman* arranged by al Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, which is comprehensive, beneficial, and includes many additions to the minimum required for every believer. These additions, however, confirm, strengthen, and complete one’s faith.

We shall adduce at the end of this book, Allah willing, a Creed of Faith, that is brief but inclusive of everything it is necessary to know of the sciences of faith [*iman*].

As for the sciences of Islam, they are to be found in the works of the leading experts on jurisprudence, may Allah be satisfied with them. The obligatory amount is that which no Muslim should be ignorant of, such as knowledge of the obligation to perform the five ritual prayers, how to perform them, their conditions and times, how to purify oneself for them, and soon. It will also include knowledge of the obligation of zakat, the amount required and the time at which it becomes obligatory; knowledge of the obligation to fast the month of Ramadan, the conditions of fasting and those things which invalidate it; and knowledge of the obligation of Haj for those who are able to perform it and the conditions necessary for one to be considered able to do so.

In sum, it is obligatory upon the Muslim to know every obligation [*fardu ain*] he must comply with and every forbidden [*haram*] thing he may ever fall into such as adultery, homosexuality, intoxicating beverages, wronging others, stealing, treachery, lying, tale-bearing, backbiting, and so on.

However, to know the details of the rulings on zakat is not obligatory for those who do not own enough money to make zakat obligatory upon them. Similarly, those who are unable to go to Haj, or those who have the ability but have yet to decide to go, for those it is not obligatory to know the integral steps [*arkan*] of Haj and the conditions necessary for its validity. However, the knowledge that both zakat and Haj are incumbent upon all Muslims is itself obligatory.

As for knowledge of the conditions of commercial transactions such as buying or selling and of marriage, it becomes obligatory on those intending to engage in such activities to learn about Allah's rulings concerning them, what makes them Valid or invalid, both upon initiating such activities and during pursuing them.

The Danger of Being Ignorant on the Religious Rulings

Ignorant is indispensable, for otherwise, a person may do something that will bring Allah's wrath upon him, whether he intended it or not. The ignorant person exposes himself, because of his ignorance, to Allah's wrath and to falling into perilous situations. How can he avoid this when he may believe that some duties are forbidden, or not necessary, and believe that certain forbidden things are obligatory, or that they are acts of obedience, or that they are not forbidden?

Ignorant is also perilous and harmful to the extreme, because due to ignorance they may fall into something which resembles disbelief or is in fact disbelief, as anyone who observes them and their words and deeds will see. Allah will not excuse any of this, for He, Transcendent is He has imposed seeking knowledge upon them, has given them the means to do so with ease, and has imposed upon scholars to teach them. Following all this, if they continue to be ignorant and negligence it is

because they are too occupied with worldly things and are following their whims and desire, can only move them farther away from Allah and render them deserving to be loathed and expelled by Him.

All this pertains to obligatory knowledge that no Muslim should be ignorant.

It is strange how you can observe the ignorant and deluded person tirelessly pursuing the world, night and day, avidly desiring it, most careful in amassing, guarding, and enjoying it, then coming up with numerous excuses for doing this.

On the other hand, such a person remaining ignorant of his religion, never having sought knowledge and never having sat with a scholar to learn from him. When someone asks about it, he justifies himself with such arguments as for lack of free time and excessive occupation, all of which leads to his falling from the sight of Allah. For Allah may He be praise has made it easy for him to seek knowledge, for scholars abound. The effort and cost required to learn the obligatory [*fardu ain*] of the religious ruling are insignificant.

On the contrary to the affairs of this world where even small gains require strenuous efforts, cost and enduring hardships. The cause of this is but the death of the heart, that have little consideration accorded to religion, and they are careless with issues of the hereafter. Such a person sees his need for the things of this world ever-present before his eyes, while his need for knowledge is absent and remote from his mind, for he will only need it and recognise its benefits after he dies. But he has forgotten death and what comes after it, overcome as he is by his ignorance and lack of knowledge.

Allah the Exalted remind us of such a person when He says, وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ. يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ. But most people do not know. They know some appearance of the life of this world, but of the hereafter they are forgetful.”¹

¹ Surah 30 Ar Rum Verse 6 – 7.

Al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “One of those (Allah refers to above) when someone placed a Dirham on his nail, he can tell you how much it weighs (he is so expert at worldly affairs), but if you to ask him about the conditions necessary for ritual purification and prayer, he will know nothing about them.”

In summation, ignorance is the origin of all evils and afflictions in both this world and the next. Were all the enemies of an ignorant man to join hands to harm him, they would be unable to cause him as much harm as he causes himself. Just as a poet reflects in his poem,

“His foes never harm the ignorant,
As much as the ignorant harms himself.”

And another has said,

“Ignorance is death before death
For their bodies are tombs before their tombs.”

The kind of ignorance that is unconditionally blameworthy is ignorance of that which Allah has made humankind obligatory to know. O brother, you should beware from this. Leave the shadows of your ignorance for the lights of knowledge. It is not obligatory upon you to acquire much knowledge, but only the amount that you cannot do without.

Obligatory to Educate Your Family in Religious Knowledge

You must also teach your wife, children and anyone else whom you are responsible. If you are incapable of teaching them, you should enjoin upon them to go to the scholars from whom they can learn the obligatory amount of knowledge. Otherwise, both you and they will have burdened yourselves with wrongdoing. The situation applies to those of them who have reached the age of legal responsibility [*baligh*]. The amount of knowledge that is obligatory upon all Muslims is not much.

The seeker of knowledge does not have to endure hardship Allah willing because it is so easy, and because Allah, the Exalted, will help him and render things even easier for him should his intention be upright. An immense reward will be his.

He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ بِهِ عِلْمًا يَسِّرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ.

“He who takes a path leading to acquiring knowledge, Allah will ease his path to the Garden.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِنَّا الْمَلَائِكَةُ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ رِضًا بِمَا يَصْنَعُ،

“The angels lay down their wings in protection for the seeker of knowledge, so pleased are they with what he is doing?”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,

حُضُورُ مَجْلَسٍ عِلْمٍ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ صَلَاةِ أَلْفِ رُكْعَةٍ وَعِيَادَةِ أَلْفِ مَرِيضٍ وَحُضُورُ أَلْفِ جَنَازَةٍ.

“To attend a gathering of knowledge is better than to pray a thousand prostrations [*raka'ats*], visiting a thousand sick and to send off a thousand funeral.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَكْفَّلَ لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ بِرِزْقِهِ.

“Indeed, Allah guarantees he who seeks knowledge of his provision.”

I say this is a special guarantee in addition to the universal guarantee Allah give every moving creature on earth when He says,

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا.

“There is no moving creature on earth but that its provision depends upon Allah.”¹

It means an increase in ease and decrease in the effort and hardship incurred in seeking provision. And Allah knows best.

Near the end of the long prophetic narrations [*hadith*] where he mentions the merits of knowledge, the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him said, “the fortunate are inspired by it (meaning knowledge), while the wretched are deprived of it.”

¹ Surah 11 Nuh Verse 6.

Now all variety of goods and favours are included in being fortunate, and all kinds of evil are included in being wretched.

You now know, from the above, that there is no excuse before Allah, the Exalted, for an ignorant person to neglect acquiring knowledge.

The Ignorant Who Neglects and The Lazy Scholar

Similarly, there is no excuse for a scholar to neglect practising what he knows. The likeness of the ignorant person who neglects seeking the obligatory knowledge is that of a slave to whom his master sends a letter, commanding him to do certain things and refrain from other things. The slave, while able to read the letter, neglects to even look at it, let alone to learn what it contains.

And the likeness of the scholar who neglects to put into practice what he knows is that of another slave who reads his master's letter, learns what it contains, then obeys none of the commands nor refrains from any of the prohibitions he finds in the letter.

May Allah have mercy on you, my brother, now consider is there any worse neglect than that of these two slaves with their master? Can they ever find justification before him? Is anyone more deserving of severe punishment for his impudence and disrespect for his master than they? So you should beware of being one of those two inauspicious men, the ignorant who does not learn or the learned who does not act upon his knowledge. Otherwise, you will perish along with those who shall perish, losing both this world and the next, which is the most manifest of all losses.

On the other hand, increasing one's knowledge of beneficial religious Sciences, widening one's scope, and acquiring more than what is strictly necessary, is one of the best means to Allah and most meritorious things in His sight. On condition that the acquisition of knowledge is purely for Allah and that one imposes upon oneself to practice what one knows and teach it to Allah's servants, again for Allah and the Last Abode.

The Status of Scholars Who Practise His Knowledge

This rank comes next to the rank of Prophethood. Every other rank belonging to the believers is beneath it, for the scholars who practice what they know are the mediators between the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and the Muslims. Allah, the Exalted say concerning the merit of scholars,

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ.

“There is no god but He: That is the witness of Allah, His angels, and those endued with knowledge, standing firm on justice.”¹

You should see how Allah mentions them along with the angels. The angels in bearing witness that Allah is One and that He upholds justice. And He the Exalted, says,

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ.

“Say: Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know?”²

Which means that they will never be equal neither in this world nor in the next, for Allah prefers those who know and grants them many more degrees. The Exalted is He says,

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ.

“Allah will raise to suitable ranks and degrees, those of you who believe and who obtained mystic Knowledge.”³

Here it means that Allah increases the ranks of those believers with knowledge over the general believers.

The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْعُلَمَاءُ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَإِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَمْ يُوْرَثُوا دِينَارًا وَلَا دِرْهَمًا، إِنَّمَا وَرَثُوا الْعِلْمَ.

“Scholars are heirs to the Prophets. Prophets bequeath neither Dinar nor Dirham, but they bequeath knowledge.”

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 18.

² Surah 39 Az-Zumar Verse 9.

³ Surah 58 al-Mujaadilah Verse 11.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,
 لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ: رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْحِكْمَةَ فَهُوَ يُقْضَىٰ بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا آتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَآتَاءَ
 النَّهَارِ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ آتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَآتَاءَ النَّهَارِ.

“There is no envy except in two cases, a man whom Allah has granted wisdom, he judges by it and teaches it day and night, and another man who Allah has given wealth and he spends it day and night.”

Here, envy is a jealous viewed positively towards the person with the said qualities and praiseworthy to affairs of the hereafter.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,

فَضْلُ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِي عَلَى أَذْنَى رَجُلٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِي.

“The superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is as my superiority over the least of my companions.”

Another version it is recorded as, كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ.

“As the superiority of the full moon over the rest of the stars.”

Now if the superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is that great, knowing that the worshipper must of necessity know. Otherwise, he would not have been called a worshipper, how greater will be the superiority of the scholar over the ignorant?

The merits of knowledge and scholars are innumerable. The Book of Allah, the Sunna of His Messenger, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, and the utterances of our virtuous ancestors concerning this matter are very well known. Many books are filled with the virtues of knowledge and scholars.

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Knowledge is better than wealth, for knowledge protects you, while you must protect wealth. Also, knowledge increases when you spend it, while wealth diminishes. Knowledge is a ruler, while wealth must be ruled.

Knowledge is Achieved Only in Practicing it.

You should know that the scholar who does not behave according

to what he knows has no merit whatsoever. He should not deceive himself with what Allah and His Messenger say about the merits of knowledge and imagine that this shall apply to him even when he does not act upon his knowledge. The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 تَعَلَّمُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ فَوَاللَّهِ لَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْكُمْ تَعَلُّوْا.

“Learn as you please, but by Allah, only when you act upon what you know will you be rewarded for it by Allah.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,

مَنْ أَزْدَادَ عِلْمًا وَلَمْ يَزِدْ هُدًى، لَمْ يَزِدْ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بُعْدًا.

“Ha who increases in knowledge, but not in right guidance, only increases in remoteness from Allah.”

Knowledge enjoys such a high rank in the sight of Allah only because of the benefit it brings to every servant of His. Exalted is He. Thus when a scholar is incapable of drawing benefit from his knowledge, how will others benefit from him? You should, therefore, that this is why he who knows but does not act on his knowledge is devoid of merit.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَشَدُّ النَّاسِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَالِمٌ لَمْ يَنْفَعَهُ اللَّهُ بِعِلْمِهِ.

“He who is to suffer the severest torment on Judgment Day is a scholar to whom Allah has not given to benefit from his knowledge.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, used to ask for Allah’s protection from the knowledge that is of no benefit and a heart that feels no humility.

The scholar who does not practice what he knows possesses only the image of knowledge, its outward form, but not its essence and reality. One of our virtuous ancestors, may Allah have mercy on them, said, “Knowledge demands its practice if not answered it will surely depart.” Here it means that its spirit, its light and its blessings depart as for its form, it does not depart but subsists to constitute proof against the evil scholar.

However, if this scholar teaches others what he knows, thereby benefiting them with it, he will be like the candle which gives light to the people while consuming or like the needle which clothes people while remaining naked. He the Exalted say,

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ.

“Do you enjoin right conduct on the people, and forget to practice it yourselves, and yet you study the Book? Will, you not understand?”¹

Part of a hadith reported,

إِنَّهُ يُؤْمَرُ بِالْعَالِمِ إِلَى النَّارِ فَتُخْرَجُ أَمْعَاؤُهُ فَيَدُورُ بِهَا فِي النَّارِ كَمَا يَدُورُ الْحِمَارُ بِالرَّحَا، فَيَطُوفُ بِهِ أَهْلُ النَّارِ فَيَقُولُونَ لَهُ: مَا بَالُكَ؟ فَيَقُولُ: إِنِّي كُنْتُ أَمُرُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَلَا آتِيهِ، وَانْهَى عَنِ الشَّرِّ وَآتَيْتِهِ. . .

“Indeed, a scholar will be ordered to the Fire, his entrails will spill out, and he will drag them around in the Fire as the donkey goes around turning the mill. The people of the Fire will pass by him and say, What is your situation? He will answer, I used to enjoin good but not do it, and forbid evil, but do it.”

In my opinion, this scholar who teaches others, but himself does nothing is a loser who is in extreme danger. He is better off than he who neither teaches others nor himself works. For this latter is a loser in every way and will perish no matter what, for no good at all remains in him and no benefit at all can come from him.

I fear he might be one of those about whom the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

يُؤْمَرُ بِأَقْوَامٍ مِنْ حَمَلَةِ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَى النَّارِ قَبْلَ عَبْدَةِ الْأَوْثَانِ فَيَقُولُونَ: يُبَدَأُ بِنَا قَبْلَ عَبْدَةِ الْأَصْنَامِ! فَيَقَالُ لَهُمْ: نَعَمْ، لَيْسَ مِنْ يَعْلَمُ كَمَنْ لَا يَعْلَمُ.

“A group among those who have memorised the Quran would be ordered to the Fire even before the idol worshippers, and when they ask, Are we

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 44.

to precede the idol worshippers? It will be said to them, “He who knows is not as he who does not.”

The Scholar Who Misrepresent is the Devil

Now a scholar who, not only does not act on his knowledge, nor teaches it, but also enjoins evil, opens for the common people the doors to false interpretations and dispensation, and teaches them how to deceive others. He is a rebellious demon, a corrupt man who is opposing Allah and His Messenger who trick the people to avoid fulfilling their obligations to them and to enable them to appropriate what belongs to others. The Devil has set him up as his deputy, making him do his work of temptation, misguidance, and seduction. In the sight of Allah, he is one of those He likened to donkeys and dogs, so vile and base they are. Donkeys and dogs, however, are better than him, for they will end up back to dust, while he will end up in the Fire.

He, Exalted is He, says,

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ.

“The similitude of those who were in charge of the obligations of the Torah, but who subsequently failed it, is that of a donkey which carries huge tomes but not understands. Evil is the similitude of people who falsify Allah’s signs and Allah guides, not people who do wrong.”¹

And He, Exalted is He, says,

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَأَتْبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْعَاوِينَ. وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرَكهُ يَلْهَثْ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ.

¹ Surah 62 Al Juma’ah Verse 5.

“Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent Our signs, but he passed them by: so Satan followed him up, and he went astray. If it had been Our Will, We should have elevated him with Our signs; but he inclined to the earth, and followed his vain desires. His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue. That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs; So relate the story; perchance they may reflect.”¹

The Corrupt Scholar

Umar may Allah be pleased with him said, “That which I fear most for you is a hypocrite who speaks like a learned man.”

Such a corrupt hypocrite may make a thorough study of the Quran and Sunna, and so become a source of sedition and affliction for the Muslims. About such people, the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَنَا مِنْ غَيْرِ الدَّجَالِ أَخَوْفُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الدَّجَالِ قِيلَ وَمَا ذَلِكَ قَالَ عُلَمَاءُ الشُّوعِ.

“I do fear for you something more than the Dajjal, other than the Dajjal! They asked, “And what is that?” He said, “An Evil Scholar.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him described people who will recite the Quran as it was sent down, but it will not go beyond their throat (just mere lip service), and they will shoot out of Islam as the arrow missing its target.

In a hadith narration it reports,

إِنَّ مَثَلَ الْمُنَافِقِ الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ كَمَثَلِ الرِّيحَانِ رِيحُهُ طَيِّبٌ وَطَعْمُهُ مُرٌّ.

“The likeness of the hypocrite who recites the Quran is that of sweet basil, its scent is fragrant, but its taste bitter.”

It is not unlikely then, after the above, to consider the person who acquires the likeness of knowledge to be a corrupt hypocrite. His sign is that neither he benefits from his knowledge, nor do others, but on the contrary, he harms himself and others.

¹ Surah 7 Al A'raf Verse 175 – 176.

On the whole, the scholar who acts on his knowledge and teaches Allah's servants is the one who deserves to be considered an heir to the Prophets. The scholar who does not act on his knowledge but teaches others is in a perilous situation, but is much better than he who neither behaves according to his knowledge, nor teaches others, and also invites to evil by opening the doors to it and rendering it easier for the people

To distinguish between scholars and choose the best among them to emulate and follow his way, thus will you be rightly-guided. Allah guides whom He will to a straight path.

Scholars Whose Acts on His Knowledge

You should now know, may Allah have mercy on you that the scholar who acts on his knowledge, who is considered by Allah and His Messenger amongst the learned in this world and the next. They have marks and signs which distinguished them apart from the confused scholar, who is categories by Allah and His Messenger amongst those whose learning is only verbose, who follow their whims and prefer this world to the next.

Among the signs of the person who is counted amongst those who are learned in the Sciences of the hereafter are that he be humble, modest, fearful, anxious, in awe of Allah, detached from the world, content with a little of it, spending in charity whatever exceeds his needs, of good counsel to the servants of Allah, the Exalted, solicitous for their welfare, compassionate, enjoining good and forbidding evil, swift to good works, constant in his devotions, guiding to good, inviting to right-guidance, possessed of gravity and commanding respect, dignified, sedate, of good character, forbearing, gentle, affable with believers, neither arrogant nor overbearing, harboring no worldly hopes in people, not avid for worldly things, nor preferring this world to the hereafter, not loving to amassing money, nor withholding it when the money should rightfully be expense. He is neither coarse, nor rude, neither argumentative, nor quarrelsome, neither harsh, intolerant, nor of bad character, neither hypocritical, nor deceitful, nor cheating. He does not prefer rich to poor people, is not a frequent visitor to rulers, and does not refrain from rebuking them when

capable of it. He is not avid for power, wealth, or position, on the contrary, he dislikes them all, does not engage in any of them, nor accept any of them except when for a dire need or necessity.

In summary, he should be everything that his knowledge directs him to be in the way of virtuous character, good deeds and should avoid every bad character or deed that his knowledge enjoins him to avoid.

These attributes of those whose knowledge is for the hereafter are attributes which should adorn every believer. However, though every believer should strive to acquire them, a scholar is more worthy of them and should be the first to acquire them. It is more of a duty to him since he is an example that people are guided by, a leader whom they emulate. Should he err, fall prey to temptation, or give precedence to this world over the next, he will carry his burden of sin and that of everyone who follows him. But if he is upright and Allah-fearing, he will receive his reward as well as additional rewards equal to those of everyone who followed him.

Importance of Inner Spirituality

The scholar well versed in the outward matters of religion should add to this the knowledge of inward attributes. Such as the attributes of the heart, knowledge of the secrets of deeds and of the issues that blemish them, of the promises and divine threats in the Book and Sunnah concerning the rewards of those who do good and the punishment of evildoers. In this way will a scholar complete himself and become fully beneficial both to himself and others. For these sciences cannot become complete without each completing the other. These were the sciences of our virtuous ancestors, as will be recognised by anyone who peruses their biographies.

Knowledge of the inward cannot stand independently from the knowledge of the outward. Similarly, outward knowledge cannot be complete without that of the inward.

As for knowledge of promises and threats, it is because they arouse the desire to live according to the injunctions of the Law and to

Virtue, and the fear of falling into prohibited things and vices. It is in becoming of a scholar to speak of the rulings concerning certain obligations, other virtuous works, or certain prohibited things, then when requested to produce some of what Allah and His Messenger have to say on this, prove incapable of quoting any relevant text. It is but by the words of Allah the Exalted and His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, that dilatation of the breasts of believers occurs, that their hearts find peace and their resolution increases.

Reflect on this passage and study it well. You should acquire a sufficient amount of each of these three sciences. Firstly, the science of the outward rulings concerning acts of worship and transactions. Then the science of inward things such as good character and the attributes of the heart. And the science of promises and threats received from Allah and His Messenger concerning the merits of acts of obedience, which are the promises, and the punishment of evil deeds, which are the threats.

It is a most emphatic duty upon scholars to do their best to disseminate this knowledge, which no Muslim would fail to benefit from and to spread it and teach it to every single Muslim.

Topics A Scholar Should Preach to the Common People

When sitting with the common people, a scholar should talk only of duties and forbidden things, supererogatory devotions, and rewards and punishments for good and bad behaviour. His words should be easy to understand and clear so that his listeners recognise and understand them. He should expend more effort in clarifying those things which he knows they do. He should not remain silent until asked about something which he knows they need and which is necessary for them; indeed, his knowledge of their need is tantamount to their asking him.

Most common people have become neglectful in matters of religion, as concerns both knowledge and works. Scholars should not fail to help them in this by not teaching and guiding them, for then everyone will perish, and hardship will increase. You seldom question a common man, and most people are common people without finding him ignorant

of duties, forbidden things, and matters of religion which it is neither permissible nor acceptable not to know.

Even in the event of his not being ignorant of all of them, he will be found ignorant of some. And in the event when you find him aware of some of these things, he will have learned them from other common people, so that should you wish to turn what he knows into ignorance, you can do so with little effort, for it has no basis and is unsound.

A Scholar Duty to the Seeker of Knowledge

When the seeker of knowledge comes to the scholar, the latter should decide whether he is qualified to understand and able to devote his time fully to studying, then he may counsel him to read books. But if he is a common Muslim wishing only to learn the obligatory minimum, he should teach him verbally, explain, make him understand, be brief, and not ask him to read books that he may not understand, nor have the time for, nor need most of what they contain. For the needs of common people in the way of knowledge are little.

Duties of Scholars and Judge

Scholars, especially those who are judges, must counsel the common Muslims who come before them with their litigations. They must put fear into them with the words of Allah the Exalted and His Messenger, speak harshly to them and threaten those who make false claims, are guilty of perjury, testify falsely, are guilty of corrupt transactions such as usury, and so on. They should tell them what the Sacred Law says concerning how forbidden such things are and how severe their punishment is.

This events and actions happen because ignorance is so widespread, and also greed and lack of concern for religion. How many a common Muslim, having heard how lying about claims, testimonies, and oaths is forbidden, has backed up from things that, owing to his ignorance, he had decided to do.

In sum, scholars need to sit with the people to call upon them

[*dakwa*] about religious sciences and explain these to them. They should discourse upon the matter which the people came to them. For instance, if they have come for a marriage contract, then they should speak to them about the rights of women in terms of dowry, current expenses, gentle treatment, and soon.

But if they have come to them to record in writing a commercial transaction, they should speak to them of valid and invalid transactions, the duties of witnesses, and so on.

This “by Allah” is better and more appropriate in such situations than to talk of that which is of no use and is connected neither with the matter at hand nor with religion.

A scholar should not chat with those who chat, nor spend any of his time in other than strengthening religion.

The above that we have been stating, that the scholar is emphatically enjoined to make his times with common Muslims fully occupied with teaching, warning, and reminding them, has become in those days one of the most important duties of the learned. Heedlessness, ignorance, and turning away from knowledge and its practice have become rampant among common people. Should the learned encourage them in this by failing to teach and remind them, corruption will dominate, and everyone will come to harm.

The neglect of religion by common Muslims are easily observable, while scholars maintain silence, neither teaching nor explaining. There is neither power nor ability save by Allah.

Conduct for the Scholar

It is one of the most imperative functions and courtesies of scholars to be for the people a good example, before they address them with their words, not to enjoin anything good upon them before being most careful to practice it, nor forbid anything evil to them without being most careful to avoid it and be most remote from it. They should also intend nothing with their knowledge, actions, and teaching but Allah and

the Last Abode, and not desire any other thing such as eminence, wealth, power, or other worldly things.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ طَلَبَ عِلْمًا مِمَّا يُبْتَغَى بِهِ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ لِيَبَاهِيَ بِهِ الْعُلَمَاءَ، أَوْ لِيُمَارِيَ بِهِ السُّفَهَاءَ،
أَوْ لِيَصْرِفَ بِهِ وَجْهَ النَّاسِ إِلَيْهِ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبَانُ.

“Whoever seeks knowledge that should be sought for Allah's sake to boast before scholars, or argue with fools, or attract important people to himself, when he meets Allah, upon him be Allah's wrath!

﴿اللَّهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا، وَعَلِّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا، وَزِدْنَا عِلْمًا،﴾

O Allah, make us benefit from what You have taught us,
teach us what benefits us and increase us in knowledge.

﴿وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ أَحْوَالِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ.﴾

Praise and Thanks Belong to Allah in all situations.

We seek Allah's protection from the states of the people of the Fire.

Chapter Three

Ritual Prayer

You should know, brothers, may Allah grant us and you the understanding of religion, inspire us with our guidance, and protect us from the evil in ourselves that the ritual prayer is the basis of religion and, of the five pillars of Islam, second in importance only to the two testimonies [*kalimah syahadah*]. It is to religion what the head is to the body. Just as there can be no life for a headless person, so there can be no religion for he who does not pray. Many hadiths related to these issues. جَعَلْنَا وَإِيَّكُمْ مِنَ الْمُحَافِظِينَ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ، الْمُقِيمِينَ لَهَا، الْخَاشِعِينَ فِيهَا، الدَّائِمِينَ عَلَيْهَا.

“May Allah make us and you carefully keep their prayers, perform them as they should, and persevere therein, depending upon it.”

In His Book, Allah orders His believing servants to do so, making this one of their distinctive attributes, when He, the Al-Mighty says,

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ.

“Guard strictly your habit of prayers, especially the Middle Prayer; and stand before Allah in a devout frame of mind.”¹

The prayers meant here are the five obligatory ones which take place at midday [*Dhuhr*], early afternoon [*Asar*], sunset [*Maghrib*], night [*Isha*] and before dawn [*Fajr*]. These are the prayers that a Muslim is not allowed to neglect under no circumstance, even if extremely old or ill, so

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 238.

long as his mind is intact. As for the middle prayer, it is the afternoon prayer, as stated in a sound hadith. Allah makes special mention of it to give it additional merit and honour. The hadith above is well known in Islam.

It has reached us that the reason for the dispensation in the Prayer of Fear is that the Muslims were with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, in one of their expeditions, as usual he may blessings and peace be upon him, led them in prayer, for the noon prayer, while the idolaters, who were not far off, watched. Once they finished, one of the idolaters said, "Had you attacked them while they were in their prayer you would have defeated them. Others said, "They have, after this prayer, another which is dearer to them than their fathers and sons, meaning the afternoon [*Asar*] prayer. Jibril, upon him, be peace, descend to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, with the instruction to the Prayer of Fear [*khauf*]. So, observe how the merit of this prayer [*Asar*] was known even to the idolaters. Allah, Exalted is He says,

مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ.

"Turn you back in repentance to Him, and fear Him: establish regular prayers, and be not ye among those who join gods with Allah."¹

The Arabic word '*inaabah*' means 'turning back to Allah'; 'Taqwa' is fear of Allah' and so establish the prayers in the prescribed manner.

And He, Exalted is He says,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ. وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ. وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ. وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ. إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ. فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ. وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ. وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَوَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ.

¹ Surah Al Rum Verse 31.

“The believers must eventually win through. Those who humble themselves in their prayers; Who avoid vain talk; Who are active in deeds of charity; Who abstain from sex, Except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or the captives whom their right hands possess, for in their case they are free from blame, But those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors. Those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants; And who strictly guard their prayers.”¹

He, the Exalted says, إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ.

“Not so those devoted to Prayer; Those who remain steadfast to their prayer.”²

Here he excludes those who pray from the generality of human who by nature become panicky and aggrieved when afflicted with hardship, but miserliness when blessed with affluence. As if Allah, the Transcendent, is saying to them that those who pray and whose prayer is real, neither panic, grieve nor miserly. I say: This is because these attributes are reprehensible [*munkar*], and whereby He the Exalted, says, وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ.

“And establish regular Prayer: indeed, prayers restrain from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest thing in life without a doubt. And Allah knows the deeds that you do.”³

He who establishes the prayer in the manner prescribed by Allah and His Messenger, his prayer rebukes him from doing anything that may displease Allah, whether one of the above mentioned or other such reprehensible things.

The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,
Pray as you have seen me pray? صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي أُصَلِّي

He only will be considered by Allah to have established the prayer and preserved it who follows and emulates the Messenger of Allah, may

¹ Surah 23 Al Muminun Verses 1 - 9.

² Surah 70 Al Ma-arij Verses 22-23.

³ Surah 29 Ankabut Verse 45.

Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, in the manner that the scholars of this nation, both righteous predecessors and later generations, may Allah be pleased with them, have recorded and transmitted it.

Inner and Outer Characteristic of the Ritual Prayer

Now the ritual prayer has an outward form and an inward reality. No prayer can be perfect or complete without both performed properly.

As for the outward form, it is the standing [*qiyam*], recitation, bowing [*ruku*], prostrating [*sajda*], and other actions of outward prayer. As for the inward reality, it is humility [*khushu*], presence [*hudur*] of the heart, perfect sincerity [*ikhlas*], reflection, and understanding of the meanings the recitation, glorification [*tasbih*], and all actions of inward prayer. The outward form of the prayer belongs to the body and the senses, while the inward belongs to the heart and the secret. The heart and secret are the locations upon which falls the gaze of Allah, the Real.

Imam al Ghazali, may Allah have mercy upon him, said, "The likeness of he who performs the outward form of the prayer but neglects its inward reality is that if the person wishes to offer a great king a gift, gives him a dead maid. As for, he who performs the outward form of the prayer incorrectly, he is like one who offers the king a maid whose limbs have been cut off and whose eyes have been plucked out. Both are exposing themselves to punishment and perhaps torture because of their disrespect and contempt for the king." Further Imam Ghazali, said "You offer your prayer but to your Lord. Beware of offering one like that, thereby deserving punishment."

Ritual Cleanliness

It is part of keeping the prayer with care and propriety to perform ritual ablutions [*wudu*] to perfection and carefully keep one's body, clothes, and place of prayer pure. The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

"Ritual purity is the key to the Prayer." الطُّهُورُ مِفْتَاحُ الصَّلَاةِ

And in another hadith, "Ritual purity is half of faith." لَطَّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ.

Complete ritual ablution is to repeat each of its motions three times, being neither too obsessive nor too neglectful. Obsessions in either ritual purification or prayer are from the Devil, who confuses thereby those whose knowledge is deficient and reason weak. One of our predecessors said, “Obsessions are due either to ignorance of the Sunna or mental illness.” The way of our predecessors in ritual purification is the praiseworthy manner of doing things, and so it is in all other things, for they are our exemplars, and we should emulate them. To renew one’s *wudu* for each prayer is of the *Sunnah*. Maintaining oneself in a constant state of ritual purity is something to be encouraged and has many benefits.

It has reached us that Allah said to Moses, may peace be upon him, “Should a calamity afflict you when you are not in ritual purity, blame only yourself.” Many authentic hadiths exist to the effect that he who performs his ritual ablution with care, all his sins are cast off the various parts of his body, and he enters the prayer pure from sins.

Hasten the Prayer at its Prescribed Time

It is part of keeping the prayer with care and propriety to hasten to perform it as soon as its time comes. There is great merit in this. It is a sign that one loves Allah, Exalted is He, and is swift to what pleases Him.

The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 أَوَّلُ الْوَقْتِ رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ، وَآخِرُهُ عَفْوُ اللَّهِ. وَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيُصَلِّي الصَّلَاةَ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجْهَا مِنْ وَقْتِهَا،
 وَلَمَّا فَاتَهُ مِنْ أَوَّلِ الْوَقْتِ خَيْرٌ لَهُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا.

“The beginning of the prescribed period is Allah’s good pleasure, and its end is Allah’s pardon. Indeed, if a slave prays without delaying it beyond its prescribed time and what he has missed from the beginning of the prescribed time would have been better for him than the whole world and what it contains.

It is ugly of a believer, engaged in a worldly pursuit when the time for the prayer comes, not to abandon it and hasten to perform the duty that Allah has prescribed for him. Worldly pursuit can be caused only by

excessive heedlessness, lack of knowledge of Allah, or weakness in one's desire for the hereafter.

As for delaying the prayer until its period runs out, or perform after its time only part of it, this is not permissible and is sinful.

The calling of the prayer [*adhan*] and [*iqama*] are parts of the rites of prayer and should be preserved. They drive devils away. May blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“During the call for prayer, the devil departs!” إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ أَذْبَرَ الشَّيْطَانُ.

Humility [*khushu*] & Presence [*hudur*]

It is also part of maintaining the prayer with care and propriety to be humble submissiveness therein, present of heart, reflect on what one is reciting, understand its meanings, feel submission and powerlessness before Allah when bowing down or prostrating, have a heart full of the magnitude and holiness of Allah when action and uttering the “Allah is Great” [*takbir*] and “Glorifying Allah” [*tasbih*], as well as throughout every other part of the prayer, avoid incidental thoughts and worldly preoccupations, and turn away from the ego's ruminations. One should concentrate solely on the proper performance of the prayer, in the exact manner that Allah has prescribed, for prayer accompanied by distraction and lack of humility or presence is useless.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him said, “Every prayer where the heart is not present is more likely to bring about punishment.” A Hadith transmission stated,

لَيْسَ لِلْعَبْدِ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ إِلَّا مَا عَقَلَ مِنْهَا. وَإِنَّ الْمُصَلِّيَ قَدْ يُصَلِّي الصَّلَاةَ فَلَا يُكْتَبُ لَهُ مِنْهَا سُدُسُهَا وَلَا عَشْرُهَا.

“A servant owns only that part of the prayer during which he was attentive.” “A man may pray; however, only a sixth or tenth of it added to his records.

Not being present means that only that part will be recorded to his credit during which he was present with Allah and humble

submissiveness before Him. It may vary from according to one's level of attentiveness and alertness. He who is present and humble during the whole prayer, it will be recorded whole to his credit while he who is distracted and inattentive during the whole of his prayer, on record is nothing to his credit.

So, strive brother, may Allah have mercy on you, to be humble and present in your prayer. Reflect on what you recite from the words of your Lord. Do not be hasty in your recitation, surely the one who rushes cannot reflect.

Composure [*Tumanina*]

Bow down and prostrate yourself with composure and stillness. Do not peck as chicken does, and then your prayer will not be valid, for composure during bowing, standing afterwards, during the two prostrations and kneeling in between, is necessary. It cannot be dispensed with, whether in obligatory or supererogatory prayers and without it the prayer is invalid. He who neither performs his bowing down and prostrations to completion, nor are sufficiently humble, is the one who steals from his prayer, as mentioned in hadith.

It is also mentioned in hadith that he who is careful with his prayer and completes it properly, his prayer comes out bright and radiant saying, "May Allah preserve you as you have preserved me." But when it is not performed properly, it comes out darkened and black and says, "May Allah neglect you as you have neglected me!" Then it is wrapped up just as a worn-out garment is wrapped up; then his face is strike with it.

A hadith says that, إِنَّمَا الصَّلَاةُ تَمْسُكُنْ وَتَحْضَعُ وَتَحْشَعُ.

Indeed, the Prayer is but servitude, humility, humble submissiveness.

Once when he noticed a man playing with his beard as he prayed, the Prophet may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَوْ حَشَعَ قَلْبُ هَذَا لَحْشَعَتْ جَوَارِحُهُ.

"Had the person's heart been still, his limbs would also have been still."

The stillness of the body is part of the heart's humility; no prayer is complete without it. Our ancestors, may Allah be pleased with them, used to say, "He who is aware of who is standing on his right and his left during prayer is not humble. Some of our ancestors were so humble during their prayers that birds alighted on them, for they stood or prostrated themselves for so long that the birds took them for a wall or some other inanimate object.

A pillar once fell in the great mosque at Basra. Out in the market place, the people were terrified, except for one man praying in the mosque, who was so absorbed in his prayer that he felt nothing at all.

Another used to tell his family, "Once I commence praying, do what you will." Meaning: raise your voices and make noises as you will for I shall not hear you. They sometimes beat the drums next to him without him hearing them.

The house of Ali ibn al Husayn, may Allah be pleased with them, caught to burn, while was in prostration. People shouted, "Fire! Fire!" O son of the Messenger of Allah!" But he did not raise his head. When he finished his prayer, they asked him why he did so? He replied, "I was distracted from it by the fire of the hereafter."

A man was once asked, "Do you experience in your prayer the same worldly whispers that we do?" He replied, "to pierce through by spears would be more beloved to me than that." Another was asked, "Do you speak to yourself of anything during prayer?" He said, "Is there anything more beloved to me than the prayer that I may want to talk to myself during it?"

Once a thief stole al-Rabi ibn al-Khaytham's horse while he was praying. The people called upon him, and Al-Rabi' said, "I saw him when he untied it." They asked him, "Why then did you not pursue him and retrieve it?" He replied, "My prayer was dearer to me than the horse, and I now declare that I am relinquishing [*halal*] the horse to him.

A Companion of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, was once praying in his garden when he was

distracted by birds flying from one tree to another. When he realised he had been distracted, he was so aggrieved that he gave the whole garden away for the sake of Allah.

In my opinion: This is all because our virtuous ancestors, may Allah be pleased with them, knew how great the importance of the prayer is and how essential it is to religion.

It has reached us that Allah Exalted is He, has divided the various parts of the prayer among forty thousand ranks of angels, each rank made of seventy thousand angels. Ten ranks are ever standing, never bowing, ten bowing, never prostrating, ten in prostration, never rising, and ten sittings, never standing. All this He joined into two prostrations [*rakaats*] that His believing servant is given to pray, so see how immense His grace and favour are upon His believing servants.

The Prophet may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَثَلُ الصَّلَاةِ الْخَمْسِ مَثَلُ نَهْرٍ غَمَرٍ عَلَى بَابٍ أَحَدِكُمْ يَفْتَحُهُ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ خَمْسَ مَرَّاتٍ، أَفْتَرُونَ ذَلِكَ يُبْقَى عَلَيْهِ مِنْ دَرَنِهِ شَيْئاً؟ قَالُوا: لَا.

“Imagine that a river flows near a man’s door-step and he bathes in it five times a day; do you think any dirt will remain on him? They answered, “No dirt will remain on him.”

May blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الصَّلَاةُ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ كَفَّارَةٌ لِمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِذَا اجْتَنِبْتَ الْكَبَائِرَ.

“One Prayer after another are expiations for what takes place between them, so long as major sins are avoided.”

Whenever it was time to pray, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, may Allah be pleased with him, used to say, “Arise and put out this fire of yours which you have kindled!” By fire, he meant their sins, while by putting it out, he meant with prayer, for it expiates and erases bad deeds. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفَا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرِي لِلذَّاكِرِينَ.

“And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and the approaches of the night: For those things, that are good remove those that are evil: Be that the word of remembrance to those who remember heir Lord.”¹

It was narrated that this verse was revealed after a man who was guilty of fore-play with a woman short of intercourse came to the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, requesting to submit to the statutory punishment [*hadd*]. The Prophet gave him no answer, till after the ritual prayer was called for and they had prayed, he called him and recited this Verse to him. The man asked, “Is this for me in particular or for the people in general?” He said, “For the people in general”

In my opinion: This is evidence that minor sins are expiated by Prayer as well as by other good deeds. However, to refrain from them is better and safer. No statutory punishment is prescribed for anything short of intercourse, such as kissing or touching, but the man thought there was and wished to be purified. Allah and His Messenger know best.

Prayer in Congregation

It is part of keeping the Prayer with care and propriety to persevere in performing it in a congregation, for congregational prayer is twenty-seven times better than solitary prayer, as in the authentic hadith. He who takes such religious profit lightly, even though this reward is for the next world, it is obtainable without undue effort or hardship, is in gross negligence of the benefits of religion. The reward is great, yet his desire for the hereafter feeble. Especially when he knows full well how much effort he expends and how many hardships he endures in his pursuit of a little wretched worldly profit. Whenever he does achieve any of the latter, even something trivial at the cost of much toiling, he forgets his toil and considers what he has gained of this limited worldly profit to be an enormous victory. Is he finds these traits in himself not afraid and fear that he may be considered and counted by Allah among the hypocrites

¹ Surah 11 Hud Verse 114.

[munafiq] or among those who doubt Allah's promises? From what we know about the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, there is no indication that he ever prayed a compulsory prayer on his own, not even once.

Ibn Masud, may Allah be pleased with him said, "I witnessed a time when none stayed behind from the congregational prayer except a known hypocrite." A man was brought, in the days of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, supported by two men, so old was he, till he stood in the rank.

Once the blind companion (Abdullah) ibnu Ummi Maktum complained to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, that he had no one to lead him to the mosque, that Madina in those days had many wells and reptiles, and that his house was far from the mosque. He hoped to receive from him a dispensation from attending the congregational prayer. Having heard him, the Prophet replied that he is to be dispensed, but when ibnu Ummi Maktum he rose to depart, the Prophet called him back to ask him, "Do you hear

"Come to prayer, come to salvation"? حَيِّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ حَيِّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ؟

He replied, "Yes!" Then may blessings and peace be upon him, said, "Come on then!" Meaning you must come to the Prayer for there is no excuse for you. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ سَمِعَ الدِّعَاءَ فَارِعًا صَحِيحًا فَلَمْ يُجِبْ فَلَا صَلَاةَ لَهُ.

"He who hears, the Call, is unoccupied and healthy, but does not respond, for him there is no prayer."

He once threatened to burn the houses of certain people who neglected the congregational prayer. There is a hadith to this effect, threatening those who abandon the congregational prayer without a valid excuse with the utmost severity. A valid excuse is that which makes one entirely incapable of attending or if capable, then only at the cost of extreme hardship that most people would find difficult to bear. Nevertheless, attending is better and its reward greater, except in certain rare instances. An example would be continuous diarrhoea, which would threaten to soil the mosque, and other similar instances.

To be excused means that there is to be no blame. If one is truly incapable and sincere in wishing to attend, in the person's heart feels sadness and grief for missing acts of obedience and not giving due reverence to his Lord's prescription, then he will receive his reward.

Just as once he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said, "We have left behind in Medina people who are with us even as we march and as we cross each valley, for they were impeded with valid excuses. It seems that they were those about whom Allah said,

وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَا أَجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا.

"Nor is there blame on those who came to you to be provided with mounts, and when you said, "I can find no mounts for you," they turned back, their eyes streaming with tears of grief."¹

These are those who are true and sincere like them, have a powerful desire for what is with Allah, and are willing to sacrifice their lives and all else to obtain His good pleasure. So beware of leaving the congregational prayer for no impervious excuse such as you can present to Allah, the Knower of the Unseen!

Should you decide to stay home for reasons to do with the soundness of either your religious or worldly affairs, then go out to the mosque at each prayer time to pray in congregation, or else arrange for someone to join you at home, even if one person, that you may avoid the blame and obtain the reward. The merit of the congregation is obtained by one man leading the prayer and another following him; however, the greater the number, the better.

The prayer is purer and of more reward when a leader is a man of goodness and virtue. It then becomes superior to that performed behind someone, not of such qualities. Therefore, you should strive to pray behind those who are known for *taqwa*, and this is only as to achieve what is better and of more merit. On the other hand, the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah 9 At-Taubah Verse 92.

“Pray behind any man, whether good or corrupt.” صَلُّوا خَلْفَ كُلِّ بَرٍّ وَفَاجِرٍ

Walking to the mosque to pray brings on a great reward, as in hadith, for it is said that every single step a servant takes to the mosque is counted to his credit and recorded in his good deeds.

Also, waiting for one prayer after another is an act of worship. For example: to pray *Maghrib* then sit in the mosque waiting for *Isha*. He who is waiting for to prayer is considered by Allah to be praying, and the reward of those who are in actual prayer is recorded for him, whether he has already performed one prayer and is waiting for the next, or has come early to the mosque and is sitting waiting.

He who remains where he has prayed will have the angels praying for him and asking forgiveness until either he breaks his ritual purity or talks. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَلَا أَذُلُّكُمْ عَلَى مَا يَمْحُوهُ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْخَطَايَا وَيَرْفَعُ بِهِ الدَّرَجَاتِ؟ إِسْبَاغُ الْوُضُوءِ عَلَى الْمَكَارِهِ. وَكَثْرَةُ الْخُطَى إِلَى الْمَسَاجِدِ. وَانْتِظَارُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الصَّلَاةِ، فَذَلِكَ الرِّبَاطُ.

“Shall I inform you of that with which Allah erases sins and raises degrees? To perform ritual ablutions thoroughly even in unpleasant circumstances, to walk many steps to the mosque, to wait for one prayer after another. These actions are your bond in standing guard!”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَزَالُوا فِي الصَّلَاةِ مَا انتَظَرْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ.

“You continue in the state of prayer as you wait for the next prayer.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

بَشِّرِ الْمَشَّائِينَ لَيْلَى الْمَسَاجِدِ فِي الظُّلُمِ بِالنُّورِ النَّامِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Give good news to those who constantly walk to the mosque in the dark that they shall have complete light on Resurrection Day.”

It has also been transmitted that when a man walks to the mosque,

it is recorded for him a reward. Allah shall determine his reward for one step expiates one sin, the next step is recorded for him as a good deed, and the next raise him one degree. Then, just as walking to the mosque was recorded to his credit, so will his walking back home.

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا تَزَالُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تُصَلِّي عَلَى أَحَدِكُمْ مَا دَامَ فِي مَجْلِسِهِ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي فِيهِ مَا لَمْ يُحْدِثْ أَوْ يَتَكَلَّمَ تَقُولُ: اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ، اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْهُ.

“The angels will continue to pray for each of you as long as he remains where he has prayed, not broken his ritual purity [*wudu*] or spoken. The angels will say, “O Allah, forgive him!” “O Allah, have mercy on him!”

First Row [*Saf Awal*]

It is of the utmost importance to strive persistently to pray in the first row, for he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى الصُّفُوفِ الْمُقَدَّمَةِ.

“Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings to those in the front ranks.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, also said

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ النَّاسُ مَا فِي الْأَذَانِ وَالصَّفِّ الْأَوَّلِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَجِدُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَسْتَهْمُوا عَلَيْهِ لَاسْتَهْمُوا.

“Were people to know what the merit in the Call and the first row, then they have no other way but to draw lots. Thus they have to draw lots.”

Thus, those who wish to obtain the merit of praying in the first row should be there early, before the crowd arrived, and he should outstrip them to the first row, for if he comes late and still wishes to reach the first row he may need to cross over their shoulders, which is forbidden. In such cases, it is better not to insist on praying in the first row, after which one must reprimand oneself for being so late as to have allowed other people to precede him there. A hadith narrated,

لَا يَزَالُ أَقْوَامٌ يَتَأَخَّرُونَ حَتَّى يُؤَخَّرَهُمُ اللَّهُ.

“Some people will persist in being late until Allah that hold them back.”

Straighten the Row [*Saf*]

An important prophetic practise that people seem to have forgotten to straighten the ranks and line up in an orderly fashion. May blessings and peace be upon him, used to do this himself, commanded others to do it and encouraged them, saying,

لَتَسُوْنَ صُفُوفَكُمْ أَوْ لِيُخَالِفَنَّ اللَّهُ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ.

“Straighten your ranks or Allah will cause discord between your hearts!”

And he also said, إِنِّي لَأَرَى الشَّيَاطِينَ تَدْخُلُ فِي خَلَلِ الصُّفُوفِ.

“Indeed, I see the devil penetrating the gaps in the ranks.”

It is therefore recommended to press elbows against each other when straightening the ranks. Such that no one should stand ahead or behind another. This prophetic practice needs to be prioritised.

The Imams should take special care of this and enjoin upon those who pray to conform to it. It incumbent upon the Imam more than other Muslims to do this, for they are those who guide to goodness and *taqwa*, for this is how Allah commanded them. He Exalted is He, say,

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ.

“And assist one another in righteousness and piety, but help not each other in sin and aggression.”¹

Hasten to the first row, may Allah have mercy on you, assist straightening the rows as much as you can. Indeed, this is one of the prophet practices that have lapsed, so he who brings it back to life will be with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, in the Garden; as has been handed down

The Excellence of Congregation prayer for *Isha* and *Fajr*

You should know that, as mentioned before, it is of the utmost importance to persevere in praying in congregation. However, it is even more important in *Isha* and *Fajr* prayers, and there is more merit in it.

¹ Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 2.

Concerning this, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ صَلَّى الْعِشَاءَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَامَ نِصْفَ اللَّيْلِ. وَمَنْ صَلَّى الصُّبْحَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَامَ اللَّيْلَ كُلَّهُ.

“He who prays the *Isha* prayer in congregation is as if he has stood in prayer half the night, and he who prays *Fajr* in congregation is as if he has stood in prayer all-night-long.

And, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

فَرَقَ مَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ، أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حُضُورَ الْعِشَاءِ وَالصُّبْحِ فِي الْجَمَاعَةِ.

“The difference between the hypocrites and us is that they cannot attend *Isha* and *Fajr* in a congregation.”

And, there is a prophetic narration that stated,

مَنْ صَلَّى الْعِشَاءَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ كَانَ ذِمَّةُ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يُصْبِحَ، وَمَنْ صَلَّى الصُّبْحَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ كَانَ فِي ذِمَّةِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يُمْسِيَ.

“He who prays *Isha* in congregation remains under Allah’s protection till morning. And he who prays *Subuh* in congregation remains under Allah’s protection until evening.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him added,

فَلَا يَطْلُبَنَّكُمُ اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ ذِمَّتِهِ.

“Let not Allah ask you to account for those under His protection.”

Meaning: Allah will prevent others to plan or cause harm to those who are under His protection.

We have been told that al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf (the governor of Basrah during the Bani Umaiyah period), as iniquitous, tyrannical, and oblivious of Allah’s limits as he was, always asked those who were brought to him during the daytime, “Did you pray in a congregation for *Subuh*? Whenever the person answered “Yes!” He set him free, anxious that Allah should not ask him to account for a man under His protection.

Friday Congregational Prayer [*Al-Jumaat*]

Now that you are aware of what has been received from the Messenger, may blessings and peace be upon him, in the way of insistence upon never leaving praying in congregation without a valid excuse, know and be sure that he who abandons the *Jumaat* prayer is much more deserving of those threats and insistence, for it is by consensus an individual obligation [*Fardu Ain*]. Indeed, he, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ تَرَكَ ثَلَاثَ جُمُعٍ مِنْ غَيْرِ عَذْرِ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ.

“A person who leaves three *Jumuats* out of indifference, without excuse, Allah will stamp upon his heart.”

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with both, was once asked about a man who prayed all night and fasted every day, but attended neither *Jumaat* nor the other congregational prayers. He answered, “He is in the Fire.”

No believer can leave *Jumaat* without excuse, having heard His saying, Exalted is He,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ
ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ.

“O you who believe! When upon hearing the call to prayer on Friday [*Jumaat*], hasten earnestly to the Remembrance of Allah, and leave off business for that is best for you if you but knew!”¹

And yet, you will find some people who claim to be Muslims and believers, who hear Allah's words and His Messenger, then neglect *Jumuat* without excuse, or with invalid excuses, acceptable neither to Allah, nor His Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, excuses such as cannot relieve them of obligatory duties. We have already said that the valid excuse is that which renders one entirely incapable of attending or if capable, he must endure such hardship as is

¹ Surah 62 Al Jumuat Verse 9.

too difficult to hear, so that in practice he is not capable. This situation is much more applicable to *Jumaat*. Only he would leave it without a valid excuse is a doubting hypocrite who has missed the truth, and whose heart has lost the lights of reverence for Allah the Tremendous and the rights of His Lordship. There is for the servant neither honour, nor degree, nor happiness, nor success in this world or the next, without regularly fulfilling these rights and persevering in doing so. Thus see how this evil servant disdains his happiness and success and cares little how he will fail and perish for neglecting Allah's rights and the obligatory rites He has imposed upon him.

We ask Allah for wellbeing and safety and seek His protection from being overtaken by wretchedness and evil destiny.

You should know also that when, even though in possession of a valid excuse, one still attends *Jumaat*, this is better, for it indicates that one is complete in one's reverence for Allah and respect for His rights, that one desires to the full what Allah has and fears to the full His wrath and punishment.

Friday – The Honourable Day

You should know, may Allah make you happy, that Friday is the master of all days and that it is greatly honourable in the sight of Allah. Adam, may peace be upon him, was created on it. Allah will bring about the Hour. In it, He permits the people of the Garden to visit Him. The Angels call Friday the Day of Increase because Allah opens the gates of mercy with such abundance, grants so much favour, and distributes so much good.

In this day is a noble hour when all prayers are answered. It is not known which hour of the day it is, as have stated Imam al-Ghazali and others.

Keep to good works and acts of worship on that day. Do not occupy yourself with other than that, unless it is necessary, for this day should be dedicated to the hereafter. It is sufficient that one occupies all other days with worldly pursuits. What a waste! What a loss! A believer

should devote all his days and nights to his life to come. If he is unable because of worldly preoccupations, then the least he can do is to devote that one day to the hereafter.

Prophetic Good Deeds on Friday

It is a Sunna to recite Surah al-Kahfi and to invoke blessings on the Prophet in abundance on Friday and Friday evening, so keep to this, as well as to being early in going to the *Jumaat* prayer. At the very least, be there before or when the sun reaches its zenith. It is contrary to the *Sunnah* to delay praying the *Jumaat* prayer until half its time or so is gone. On the contrary, the *Sunnah* is to pray as soon as the time for midday [*Zuhr*] comes, as the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him used to do.

Listen attentively, may Allah have mercy on you, to the khutbah and the counsels delivered, heed them, and feel that they are addressed to you personally.

Some of the craftsmen and other workers in the market place, upon whom *Jumaat* is obligatory, come late. Coming late is one of the most reprehensible innovations [*bid'as*]. Governors should impose upon them to attend and punish those who do not, once they have explained the situation to them and warned them. Governors are not permitted to neglect this and other similar matters. Allah only gave them power over His servants so that they may establish among them the rites of religion, get them to perform its obligatory duties and avoid prohibited things. Worldly affairs must come second for those in charge. Allah knows best.

Supererogatory [*Nawafil*] Prayers

It is part of the proper observance of the ritual prayer to persevere in performing the supererogatory prayers attached to them, both those that are strongly recommended [*rawatib*] that may he, blessings and peace be upon him did not fail to perform; before and after the compulsory [*fardu*] prayers; and those that are less strongly recommended. Supererogatory devotions compensate for shortcomings in obligatory ones, as has been transmitted. Whenever the obligatory act

is flawed or incomplete because of lack of humility or presence of the heart, or for any other reason, supererogatory devotions compensate for these flaws and complete the rite. Therefore, he who has no supererogatory devotions, his obligatory acts remain incomplete, and he misses the immense reward he has been promised for these devotions. It has been handed down that the first thing a servant is asked to account for is the ritual prayer. Should it be found wanting, as the narration stated, “See if he has any supererogatory [*nawafil*] prayers to make up the shortfall of his ritual prayer.” These firmly recommended prayers are too well known to deserve [detailed] mention.

Odd [*Witr*] Prayer

Among the most well-established and strongly recommended prayer to perform and persevere is the *witr*. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَتَرُّ يُحِبُّ الْوِتْرَ فَأَوْتِرُوا يَا أَهْلَ الْقُرْآنِ.

“Allah is *Witr*, and He loves what is *Witr*, so perform your *Witr*, O people of the Quran.”

Every Muslim should be counted among the people of the Quran since he believes in it and is required to act by what it contains. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said

الْوِتْرُ حَقٌّ، فَمَنْ لَمْ يُؤْتِرْ فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا.

“The *Witr* reflects the Oneness of Allah is true, so he who does not perform the *Witr* is not one of us.”

The maximum number in *Witr* is eleven *rakaats*, while the minimum is one *rakaat*. One should never confine oneself to one, and rather the acceptable minimum is three. He who prays three *rakaats* should in the first *rakaat* after the *Fateha*, recite Surah 87 *Al-Ala*. In the second after the *Fateha*, Surah 109 *Kafirun*. In the third *rakaat*, after the *Fateha*, recite Surah 112 *Al-Ikhlās*, Surah 113 *Al Falaq* and Surah 114 *An Nas*. He who prays more than three *rakaats* in his *Witr* may recite whatever he can of the Quran before the last three *rakaats*. The longer the recitations, the better. In the last three, he should recite what we have just mentioned.

To perform one's *Witr* at the end of the night is better for he who is so accustomed to getting up that he rarely misses it. But he who is not so accustomed should perform his *Witr* before going to sleep, for this is better and more cautious. Once he has done so, should he awaken and wish to pray, let him pray to his heart's desire; his first *Witr* will suffice him.

Mid-Morning Prayer [*Dhuha*]

It is a *Sunnah* to persevere in praying the *Dhuha* prayer. The minimum is two, and the maximum is eight rakaats. According to some, it is twelve. Its merit is great. The best time for it is when about a quarter of the day has elapsed. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said
يُصْبِحُ عَلَى كُلِّ سُلَامَى مِنْ أَحَدِكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ: فِكُلُّ تَسْبِيحَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ، وَكُلُّ تَحْمِيدَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ،
وَكُلُّ تَهْلِيلَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ، وَكُلُّ تَكْبِيرَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ، وَأَمْرٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ صَدَقَةٌ، وَنَهْيٌ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ صَدَقَةٌ.
وَيُجْزَى عَنْ ذَلِكَ رَكْعَتَانِ يَرْكَعُهُمَا مِنَ الضُّحَى.

“The morning comes, and upon each of your joints [*sulamaa*], a charity is due. Every glorification of Allah [*tasbih*] is a charity, every praise and thanks to Allah [*tahmid*] is a charity, every recital of divine oneness of Allah [*tahlil*] is a charity, every expression of the Greatness of Allah [*takbir*] is a charity, to enjoin good is a charity, to forbid evil is a charity, yet the two *rakaats* prayed during *Dhuha* suffice for all this.”

And, he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said

مَنْ حَافَظَ عَلَى شُفْعَةِ الضُّحَى، غُفِرَتْ ذُنُوبُهُ، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ زَبَدِ الْبَحْرِ.

“He who perseveres in the pair of *Dhuha*, his sins are forgiven even if they are as profuse as the foam of the sea?”

The pair [*shufaa*] is two *rakaats*, and [*sulamaa*] means joints. In each human being, there are three hundred and sixty joints, as the number of the days of the year.

The *Dhuha* prayer is also called *Salat al-Awwabin*, which is the same appellation of the supererogatory prayer between *Maghrib* and

Isha. The *awwab* is he who is ever turning back to Allah in times of distraction. These two times, that of *Dhuha* and that between the two-night prayers, are times of distraction away from Allah, the first because people are engaged in earning their living, and the second because people are busy returning to their homes and eating their meals. Thus, he who returns to Allah and attends to His service in those times will have high status with Allah.

Glorifying Allah [*Tasbih*] Prayer

It is recommended to pray the *Tasbih* prayers, which consists of four *rakaats*. There are many narrations about its merits, and one of which is that he who prays it all his sins, past and future, will be forgiven. The Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said to his uncle al-Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, as he taught it to him,

صَلِّهَا فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ أَوْ فِي كُلِّ جُمُعَةٍ أَوْ فِي كُلِّ شَهْرٍ أَوْ فِي كُلِّ سَنَةٍ أَوْ فِي الْعُمْرِ مَرَّةً.

“Pray it every day, every week, every month, every year, or even once in your lifetime.”

Some scholars have said, may Allah have mercy on them, “This prayer has been tried and found effective for obtaining important needs.” If the prayer is at night, it should be with two Opening Announcement of Allah's Greatness [*Takbiratul ihram*], two Final Greetings, Witness and Testifying [*Tashahhuds*] and two Concluding Greeting [*Taslims*], which means two *rakaats* followed by another two. But if the prayer is during the day, it will be four *rakaats* at once with one *Takbir* and *Tashahhud*.

There are two protocols acceptable in performing it:

The first is to open the prayer with *takbiratul ihram*, recite the opening supplications [*doa iftitah*] then invoke fifteen times,

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ.

“Glory to or Transcendent is Allah, and all Praises and Thanks belongs to Allah, and there is no god but Allah, and Allah is Greatest.”

Then recite the *Fatiha* and a *surah*; then repeat the invocations ten times,

then bow [*rukuk*] and repeat them ten times, then straighten up [*ittidal*] and repeat them ten times, then prostrate [*sujud*] and repeat them ten times, then sit from prostration and repeat them ten times, then prostrate again and repeat them ten times, then stand up for the second *rakaat* and repeat them fifteen times before beginning recitation, and so on.

The second is different from the first in that one does not recite the invocations before but after Quranic recitation, and this will be fifteen times, then one proceeds as mentioned above, except that they are repeated ten times after the second prostration, either before standing up or after doing so but before reciting the *Fatiha*. So understand! Thus, there will be seventy-five invocations in each *rakaat* to complete a total of three hundred in the four *rakaats*.

The scholars have also said, “The usual invocations recited during bowing [*rukuk*], straighten up [*ittidal*], prostrating [*sujud*], and sitting, are still to be recited before the special invocations of *Salatul Tasbih*. Also, if the person forgot to invoke the *Tasbih* during any of the phases of the prayer, they are recited in the next phase.

In my opinion, no worshipper should neglect to perform this prayer every week or at the very least every month. Allah knows best.

Divine Worship Between *Maghrib* and *Isha*

It is firmly recommended to bring to life the period between the two-night prayers, with supererogatory [*nawafil*] prayers, which is best, or with recitations of the Quran, or the remembrance of Allah Exalted is He, (in its various forms) such as *tasbih*, *tahlil* and so on. The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ صَلَّى بَعْدَ الْمَغْرِبِ سِتَّ رَكَعَاتٍ لَا يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُنَّ بِكَلَامٍ عَدَلْنَ لَهُ عِبَادَةٌ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً.
 “He who prays six *rakaats* after *Maghrib*, without speaking evil in between, they will be equivalent for him to twelve years of divine worshipping?”

And, in another narration, it stated that he who prays twenty *rakaats* between *Maghrib* and *Isha* should have a mansion built for him in the Heavens.

In summary, this period is among the noblest and superior of times, so that it is most important to occupy it regularly with divine worship and devotions thus avoid heedlessness and wasting time.

It has been narrated that it is recommended not to sleep before *Isha*, so beware of this, for it is a Jewish custom. A narration states,

مَنْ نَامَ قَبْلَ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ فَلَا أَنَامَ اللَّهُ عَيْنَهُ.

“Whoever sleeps before the *Isha* prayer, may Allah forbid his eyes to sleep.”

Nawafil after Isha

Persevere in praying four *rakaats* after *Isha*. There is much merit in them, for he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَرْبَعٌ بَعْدَ الْعِشَاءِ كَمِثْلِهِنَّ مِنْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ.

“Four (*rakaats*) after *Isha* have similar rewards likes (four *rakaats*) on the Night of Power [*Laylatul Qadr*].”

Each *rakaat* during *Laylatul Qadr* equals thirty thousand *rakaats* on any other night, and this can be calculated from His, Exalted is He saying,

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ.

“The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.”¹

So do reflect on this! It is categorically discouraged to speak or chat after the *Isha* prayer, unless what is said is appropriate, useful and correct, such as studying or discussing religious knowledge and mutual reminding or any other such act of goodness.

Night Vigil [*Tahajjud*]

The Night Vigil and its prayers contain tremendous merit and formidable reward. There are many records about them in the Book and *Sunna* that it would be too long to enumerate their merits, nor would it

¹ Surah 97 Al Qadr Verse 3.

be possible to exhaust them. Allah, Exalted is He, said to His Messenger, يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُرْمَلُ فَمِ اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا. نِصْفُهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا. أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا. “O you wrapped up in garments! Keep vigil at night, but not all night. Half of it or a little less, or a little more; and recite the Quran in slow, measured rhythmic tones.”¹

Then He Exalted is He, say,

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَى مِنْ ثُلُثِي اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ وَثُلُثَهُ، وَطَائِفَةٌ مِنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ.

“Your Lord knows how you keep vigil and sometimes pray nearly two-thirds of the night, or sometimes half or a third of the night, and so do a party of those with you.”²

And also He, Exalted is He, say,

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ عَسَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا.

“And pray in the small watches of the morning it would be an additional prayer of spiritual benefit for you, soon will Your Lord raise you to a station of praise and glory.”³

And He, Exalted is He, say to describe the believers,

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ.

“Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in Fear and Hope: and they spend (in charity) out of the sustenance which We have bestowed on them.”⁴

And He, Exalted is He, say,

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ. وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ.

“They used to sleep but little of the night, then pray at dawn for Allah’s forgiveness.”⁵

¹ Surah 73 al-Muzzammil Verses 1-4.

² Surah 73 al-Muzzammil Verse 20.

³ Surah 17 Al’Isra Verse 79.

⁴ Surah 32 Al Sajdah Verse 16.

⁵ Surah 51 Ad Dhariyat Verses 17-18.

The Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,
أَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الْمُكْتُوبَةِ صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ.

“The best ritual prayers after the obligatory are those prayed at night.”

And he upon whom be blessings and peace, said,
عَلَيْكُمْ بِقِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ، فَإِنَّهُ دَابُّ الصَّالِحِينَ قَبْلَكُمْ وَفُرْبَةٌ لَكُمْ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ، وَمَكْفَرَةٌ لِلْسَّيِّئَاتِ،
وَمَنْهَاءٌ عَنِ الْإِثْمِ، وَمَطْرَدَةٌ لِلدَّاءِ عَنِ الْجَسَدِ.

“You should pray at night, for it was the custom of the virtuous before you, that bring you closer to your Lord, a repellent from evil deeds, a requital of sins, and protection for the body from illness.”

And he upon whom be blessings and peace, said,
أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ، وَأَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ، وَصِلُوا الْأَرْحَامَ، وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ
تَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ.

“O People! Spread the greeting [*salam*], feed the poor and needy, preserve your kinship bonds, offer prayers at night when others are asleep, and thus enter Paradise in peace.”

And he upon whom be blessings and peace, said,

صَلِّ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ وَلَوْ كَحَلْبِ شَاةٍ.

“Pray at night, even if it is a short time as it takes to milk a ewe.”

And he upon whom be blessings and peace, said,

شَرَفُ الْمُؤْمِنِ قِيَامُ اللَّيْلِ، وَعِزُّهُ السَّتِغْنَاؤُهُ عَنِ النَّاسِ.

The honour of a believer is to keep vigil at night, and his glory is to stand in no need of another human being.

And he upon whom be blessings and peace, said,

مَنْ قَامَ بِعَشْرِ آيَاتٍ لَمْ يُكْتَبْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ، وَمَنْ قَامَ بِمِائَةِ آيَةٍ كُتِبَ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ، وَمَنْ
قَامَ بِأَلْفِ آيَةٍ كُتِبَ مِنَ الْمُقْنَطَرِينَ.

“He who keeps vigil with ten verses shall not be written among the heedless. He who keeps vigil with a hundred verses shall be written among the obedient. He who keeps vigil with a thousand verses shall be written among those possessing unlimited afterlife provisions [*quintars*]. Another hadith states that a *quintar* equals twelve thousand units [*uqiyah*], each *uqiyah* worth more than everything between heaven and earth.

Scholars have pointed out that from the beginning of Surah 67 al-Mulk till the end of the Quran, the verses number one thousand. An authentic hadith stated,

إِنَّ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ سَاعَةً، لَا يُؤَافِقُهَا عَبْدٌ مُسْلِمٌ، يَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ خَيْرًا مِنْ أَمْرِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ إِيَّاهُ.

“Indeed, in the night, there is an hour when no Muslim servant asks Allah for anything good, whether of this world or the next, without it being granted. And this occurs every night.”

If this is the only hadith on the merits of night vigil and keeping vigil, it would have sufficed.

But he upon whom be blessings and peace, also said,

يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ فَيَقُولُ: هَلْ مِنْ دَاعٍ فَاسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ، هَلْ مِنْ سَائِلٍ فَأُعْطِيَهُ، هَلْ مِنْ مُسْتَغْفِرٍ فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ.

“Our Lord descends to the Terrestrial Heaven when only the last third of the night remains and ask, “Is there anyone supplicates, that I may answer to him? Is there anyone making a request, that I may grant it to him? Is there anyone asking for forgiveness, that I may forgive him?”

Reflect on this hadith and the one before it, may Allah have mercy on you. Read them repeatedly, that your breast may expand to accept night vigils and that your resolution may increase. May your desire for them become sincere, and may laziness and heedlessness abandon you, and similarly too much sleep, which reduces the blessings in this life and wastes time.

In a historical record [*atsar*], it stated that he who sleeps too much arrives a poor man on Judgment Day.

Another recorded that two *rakaats* in the deep of the night constitute a treasure of goodness.

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فِي جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ، فَإِذَا اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مُصَلِّيًا فِي الْوَقْتِ فَكُنْ.
“The nearest the Lord comes to His servant is in the deep of the night. If you can pray at such times, then do so.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، فَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ، فَيَقُولُ: أَيُّنَ الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ تَتَجَاوَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ؟ فَيَقُومُونَ وَهُمْ قَلِيلٌ، فَيَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ. . .

The people will be gathered on even ground on Doomsday; then a Caller will call, “Where are those who gave up their beds for prayer?” At that, they will stand up, but there will be just a few of them. They will enter the Garden without judgment.”

You should know that night vigil are among the most difficult act for the self, especially for one to rise after having slept a little. However, they become lighter to bear when one becomes accustomed to them and performs them regularly when one exercises patience in enduring hardship and strives hard at the beginning. Then the door is opened to intimate comfort with Allah, Exalted is He, the sweetness of communing with Him, and the pleasure of being alone with Him, Mighty and Majestic is He. At this point, the person not only no longer finds night vigils too difficult, nor is inclined to surrender to indolence, but on the contrary, remains ever eager for more, and this happens to the virtuous among Allah’s servants.

So much, so that one of them said, “If the people of the Garden are in a state similar to ours during the night, they are living pleasantly indeed”. Another said, “Forty years passed, there is nothing that saddens me more than the rise of dawn. Another said, “The people of the night in their nights have more pleasure than the people of frivolity in their play.”

Another said, “Were it not for night vigils and the company of brothers in Allah, I would not have wished to remain in this world.”

There are innumerable well-known anecdotes to this effect. Many of them used to pray the dawn prayer having maintained their ritual purity [wudu] since *Isha*. May Allah be pleased with them as the Exalted says, **أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمْ أَقْتَدِهِ.**

“Those are they whom Allah has guided, therefore copy the guidance they received.”¹

Therefore, you must keep night vigils, may Allah have mercy on you, persevere in them, and perform them regularly. Be one of those servants Allah, as the All-Merciful described,

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا. وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا.

“And the servants of the Most Gracious who walk on the earth in humility and when the ignorant address them, they say, “Peace!” Those who spend the night in adoration before their Lord prostrate and standing.”²

You should acquire the other of their attributes, those described by Allah in the following verses the should you find yourself unable to keep frequent night vigils, He says, Exalted is He,

“Recite what you can of the Quran.”³ **فَاقرءُوا مَا تيسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ.**

The reference here is to recitation during night prayers. And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said

“Pray at night, even if as little as one *rakaat*.” **عَلَيْكُمْ بِقِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ وَلَوْ رَكْعَةً.**

How beautiful and excellent would it be for he who knows the Quran by heart to recite some of it every night in his prayers, so that he may recite it from beginning to end, completing its recitation during his

¹ Surah 6 Al-Anam Verse 90.

² Surah 25 Al-Furqan Verse 63-64.

³ Surah 73 Al-Muzzammil Verse 20.

Night Vigils. The recitations he can accomplish in a month, forty days or less or more, according to how much energy and resolution he has.

You should know that a little that is consistent is better than occasional abundance. May blessings and peace be upon him, said,
أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.

“The beloved deeds for Allah are those routinely perform, even if few.”

So one should recite the Quran in the manner just mentioned set an amount of recitation [*hizb*] as regular and persevere in it. Whenever any of it is missed, make it up later. In this manner, the self will become accustomed to it and trained to persevere. It should be missed only for a valid excuse.

There is a narration that stated he who is overcome by sleep and misses his routine of the Quran or part thereof, then recites it between the Morning [*Fajr*] and Midday [*Zohor*] prayers. It will be recorded for him as if he had recited it by night. He, may blessings and peace be upon him when prevented from keeping night vigil for any reason, whether sickness or any other excuse, prayed during the day what he had missed at night.

Missing Prayer is a Major Sin

You should know that it is extremely reprehensible, sinful to the utmost, and the worst among forbidden things, for Muslims to neglect their obligatory prayers. Many authentic hadiths have been handed down to the effect that he who abandons ritual prayer is a disbeliever. One such narration, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْعَهْدُ الَّذِي بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ.

“The pact that is between them and us is the ritual prayer; he who abandons it has disbelieved.”

And, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ تَرَكَ الصَّلَاةَ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ جِهَارًا.

“He who abandons the ritual prayer on purpose has disbelieved openly.”

And, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ تَرَكَ الصَّلَاةَ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَقَدْ بَرَّئْتُ مِنْهُ ذِمَّةُ اللَّهِ وَذِمَّةُ رَسُولِهِ.

“He who abandons the ritual prayer on purpose, Allah and His Messenger will disown him.”

And, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ حَافَظَ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا وَبُرْهَانًا وَنَجَاةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يُحَافِظْ عَلَيْهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ نُورًا وَلَا بُرْهَانًا وَلَا نَجَاةٌ وَكَانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَعَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَارُونَ وَهَامَانَ وَأُبَيِّ بْنِ خَلْفٍ.

“He who preserves his ritual prayer, it will be before him a light, a proof and salvation on Resurrection Day. But he who does not preserve it, it will come before him neither light, nor a proof nor salvation, and on Resurrection Day he will be in the company of Pharaoh, Qarun, Haman, and Ubayy ibn Khalaf.”

Allah’s Messenger, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, has explicitly declared he who abandons the prayer a disbeliever. Likewise, some companions and virtuous predecessors said, “I have heard the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, declare the abandonment of no works tantamount to disbelief except the ritual prayer. You should beware of abandoning the prayer, wholly or partly. If you do this, you are sure to perish along with those who are to perish, and you will have lost both this world and the next. That is, indeed, a manifest loss!

Enjoin Your Close Ones to Pray

Just as it is incumbent upon you to preserve your prayer and forbidden upon you to neglect it, so you should firmly enjoin upon your spouse, children and everyone else you are responsible for, to perform it. You should allow them no room for abandoning it. You should threaten and punish those of them who do not comply. You should show them more anger than you would show had your property been damaged. Failing to act thus would only mean that you are one who belittles the rights of Allah the Exalted and His religion.

Those whom you show anger to and punish but who nevertheless remain heedless and disobedient, you must move them away from you and keep them thus, for such people are devils devoid of goodness and blessings. You are forbidden to befriend them or keep their company and commanded to oppose and boycott them. They are those who oppose Allah and His Messenger. He, Exalted is He, says,

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ.

“You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, loving those who resist Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers or kindred. For such, He has written Faith in their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. Allah will be well pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Truly it is the Party of Allah that will achieve Felicity.”¹

Here He denies faith to those who show affection to those who oppose Him and His Messenger, even though they may be their nearest kin.

The utmost that can be allowed the common Muslim, distracted as he is and immersed in worldly pursuits is that when he misses a prayer, he should requite it at the earliest time, repent for having missed it, and resolve never to do so again. As for abandoning it altogether, never! To delay it from its appointed time is a great sin, even were it to be required later on. Being too occupied with worldly affairs is no excuse; only sleep and forgetting are excuses.

¹ Surah 58 Mujaadila Verse 22.

Rulers should ensure that the common Muslims perform their obligatory prayers. Those who abandon it due to indolence should be asked to repent. If they refuse, they should be executed. It is greatly sinful and reprehensible for those in charge to be aware of this yet do nothing about it. There is no excuse for them to leave this or other similarly important matters of religion.

﴿وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Chapter Four

Zakat

You should know, O brothers, may Allah make us and you of those who purify themselves, mention the name of their Lord, and pray, and do not prefer the life of this world over the next, for the next is better and more enduring. And that zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam and that Allah has bound zakat to the ritual prayer in His Mighty Book. For Mighty is He, who says,

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ.

“And be steadfast in prayer and regular in charity [*zakat*]: And whatever good you send forth for yourselves before you, you shall find it with Allah: for Allah sees well all that you do.”¹

In describing the character of a true believer, the Exalted says,
الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ. أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ.

“Who establish regular prayers and spend out of the gifts We have given them for sustenance: Such in truth are the believers: they have grades of dignity with their Lord, and forgiveness, and generous sustenance.”²

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 110.

² Surah 8 Al Anfaal Verses 3-4.

And He, Exalted is He, says,
وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ.

“The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is rightful and forbid what is evil: they observe prayers, practise charity [*zakat*], and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.”¹

There are more such verses. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُؤَدِّ زَكَاةَ مَالِهِ.

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him pay the zakat due on his possessions.”

Here, he, may blessings and peace be upon him, makes us understand that whoever does not pay zakat is not a believer.

You should know that he who prays, fasts, goes on pilgrimage, but does not pay the zakat due on his wealth; Allah will not accept his prayers, fasts nor pilgrimage until he pays his zakat, because these are all connected. Allah does not accept part of them unless the person performs the rest, as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, was reported to have stated.

Zakat and its Regulation

And know that zakat is obligatory on certain specified items, which are a minimum amount [*nisab*] required for the tax to be due in gold or silver, business capital and goods, grains and fruits, and certain domestic animals. It becomes due at a specified period [*haul*], which is once a year for monies, business capital and goods and animals, and at the time they are reaped for crops and fruits. The obligatory amount is specified at a quarter of a tenth (2.5%) for monies and commerce, a tenth (10%) for grains and fruits that are watered without appliances, and half the tenth (5%) for those watered with the help of appliances.

¹ Surah 9 At-Taubah Verse 71.

As for animals, these are specified to be camels, cattle, sheep, and goats. There are many details of relevance here, and the place to look for them is in the books of jurisprudence [*fiqh*]. The person who owns any of the abovementioned wealth is obliged to acquire sufficient knowledge to be able to payout his zakat. He must know the *nisab*, the amount to be given away, the deserving recipients, and so on.

Excellence of Zakat

He who pays his zakat receives a great reward, a generous recompense. By so doing, he will enjoy many benefits, both religious and worldly. There are in wealth afflictions, temptations, and problems. He who pays his zakat will be safe from these, Allah, the Exalted willing. The Prophet may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِذَا أَدَّيْتَ زَكَاةَ مَالِكَ طَيِّبَةً بِهَا نَفْسُكَ فَقَدْ أَذْهَبْتَ عَنْكَ شَرَّهُ.

“When graciously you pay the zakat due on your possessions, you shall have diverted away from the evil in them.”

The wealth of he who pays his zakat remains safe from damage or ruin, for may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا هَلَكَ مَالٌ فِي بَحْرٍ وَلَا بَرٍّ إِلَّا بِجَبْسِ الزَّكَاةِ.

“No wealth at sea or on land is destroyed except through the withholding of zakat.

May Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, also said,

حَصِّنُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بِالزَّكَاةِ وَدَاوُوا مَرْضَاكُمْ بِالصَّدَقَةِ.

“Fortify your wealth with zakat and remedy your sickness with charity.”

Wealth for which zakat has been paid is protected, guarded by Allah, for it is good and full of blessings, but wealth for which zakat has not been paid will suffer damage, for it is impure and devoid of blessings. Thus, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا خَلَطَتِ الزَّكَاةُ مَالًا إِلَّا مَحَقَّتُهُ.

“Zakat never mixes with wealth without destroying it.”

So how can it be good! And so how can there be a benefit in wealth when the blessings have been removed, leaving the evil and temptations? The destruction in question may be manifest or invisible.

The first kind is for the wealth to depart, leaving the rich person poor, panicky, fearful and full of resentment against Allah's decree, and this has indeed happened to numerous people who had been neglectful as concerns their zakat. As for the second or invisible kind, it is for the wealth to be there in abundance, but without its owner being able to enjoy any of its benefits, either in a religious way, by spending of it in charitable ways and doing good, or to his own profit, to preserve his honor and reputation. On the contrary, it may bring him great harm when he withholds it when it should be due, or spends it where it should not be, on sins for instance, may Allah protect us or on bestial appetites that are wasteful and of no benefit.

Withholding Zakat

To withhold zakat is one of the greatest of major sins. Against such behaviour, great threats and severe warnings have been proffered by Allah and His Messenger. It is feared for the withholder of zakat that he will suffer an evil end and leave this world other than as a Muslim. He may also be punished before his death, as had happened to Korah [*Qarun*] the Israelite when he withheld zakat. The Exalted says,

We made the earth to swallow him and his house.¹ فَحَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبَدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ.

It has been related that every wealth the zakat of which had been withheld shall take the form of a great serpent on the Day of Resurrection and shall be wrapped around the culprit's neck. The Exalted, says,

سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخَلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Soon shall the things which they covetously withheld wrapped around their necks, on the Day of Arising.”²

May blessings and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah 18 Al Qasas Verse 81.

² Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 180.

مَا مِنْ صَاحِبِ ذَهَبٍ وَلَا فِضَّةٍ لَا يُؤَدِّي مِنْهَا حَقَّهَا، إِلَّا إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ صُفِّحَتْ لَهُ صَفَائِحُ مِنْ نَارٍ، فَأُحْمِيَ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ، فَيَكْوَى بِهَا جَنْبُهُ وَجَبِينُهُ وَظَهْرُهُ، كُلَّمَا بَرَدَتْ أُعِيدَتْ لَهُ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ.

“A person who has gold or silver who does not pay out its due (zakat) (should know) that on the Day Arising, it will be melted into slabs, which shall be heated in the fire of Hell, to brand his forehead, sides and back. Whenever it cools down, it shall all be repeated, on a day the length of which is like fifty thousand years.”

It is also stated in hadith that he who owns cattle but does not pay the zakat due on it, they will come on Resurrection Day, more numerous than they had ever been, to trample him underneath their hooves, bite him with their teeth, and stab him with their horns.

Manners in Paying Zakat

It is part of the good manners of paying zakat to do it willingly, with pleasure, feeling good about it, grateful to those who deserve to receive it, never acting as if they were indebted to you. To give away one's zakat while seeming to reproach the recipient for taking it annuls its reward. Just as He, the Exalted, says

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى.

“O you who believe! Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury.”¹

It is inappropriate for he who gives zakat to do so reluctantly. Let him beware of this, for it is the attribute of hypocrites. The Exalted says,

وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ

“That they do not come to prayer except reluctantly, and they do not spend but unwillingly.”²

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 264.

² Surah 9 at-Taubah Verse 54.

In this verse ‘spend’ means disburse their zakat. He indicates, Transcendent is He that the hypocrite may indeed pray, but only lazily, and may pay his zakat, but reluctantly. He whose behaviour resembles these characteristics is one of them.

It is part of the good manners of paying zakat to do so from the best of one’s possessions. That is the most praiseworthy manner to do it. The obligatory is to make what is to be given away of average quality as compared with one’s possessions. To make it of the lowest quality is forbidden unless all possessions are of the same quality.

The Exalted says, وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ.

“And do not choose the worst amongst it (your wealth) to spend (zakat).”¹

It is a duty upon he who pays zakat not to give it away according to his whims, but according to the dictates of the Book and Sunna.

To distribute it according to one’s whims means to give all or part of it to those who, although deserving, are engaged in rendering one worldly service in one way or another. Should a person give another because he serves, visits, or shows respect to him, he would be acting improperly, and his zakat may even be rejected by Allah even though he who receives it is deserving. There is no harm if the deserving person is given the zakat strictly for being deserving, without any real concern for whether he is known to the giver, likely to be of any use to him or even happens to render some service.

We are drawing attention to this because some wealthy people are unconcerned with proper conduct in this matter and incapable of behaving with discernment.

Problems arise when a wealthy man gives a poor one some of his zakat but makes it seem like an ordinary donation, a gift, or something similar. The same applies should he give it to some of his needy relatives, such as parents or children, whose expenses already are his obligatory responsibility. As for giving it to relatives for whom he is not legally

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 267.

responsible, it is not only permissible but preferable, because they are his kin and may be harbouring expectations to receive something from him.

Zakat al Fitrah

As for *Zakat al Fitrah*, it is due every Ramadan and is obligatory upon every Muslim who can afford it, whether he is an adult or a child, a free man or a slave. He who is responsible for others is obliged to pay their *Zakat al Fitrah*, which is four [*mudd*] units of, may blessings and peace be upon him, measurements of dates, wheat, corn, barley or any other kind constituting the staple diet used by the local people. A person should give the same kind of food that he consumes or one of better quality. *Zakat al Fitrah* subject to strict injunctions that ordinary Muslims are frequently unaware of so that they end up not paying it, in the mistaken assumption that they belong to the category of those unable to. Scholars may Allah have mercy on them have stated that if needs be one should sell off his possessions everything that exceeds the provisions required for the eve and day of id and the necessary as regards clothes, shelter, and so on, to be able to pay one's *zakat*. There can be no stricter instructions than those. This is what jurisprudence [*Shari'a*] requires, so let every Muslim beware of not paying out his *zakat* when able to.

Given the Zakat to the Authority

You should know that when a just ruler demands that *zakat* be paid to him, then this becomes a duty. By obeying, one would have fulfilled one's obligation. It then becomes the ruler's responsibility to distribute it.

If the ruler is unjust and demands that *zakat* be paid to him, then one should comply to avoid sedition and strife. Should the ruler distribute it to those designated by Allah as deserving, who are those he can locate that belong to the eight categories, then Allah shall reward him with an immense reward, as He will reward those who paid him their *zakat*. But if he distributes it to other than those designated in the Exalted, saying,

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ.

“Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer it; for those whose hearts have been reconciled to Truth; for those in bondage and debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer. Allah ordained this and Allah is full of Knowledge and Wisdom.”¹

He would be committing a grave sin and a monstrous injustice, and wrong the wealthy by placing their zakat where it does not belong, and the poor by not giving them what Allah has decreed is their rightful share of the possessions of the wealthy. Allah made zakat obligatory that it might be a purification for the wealthy and a help for the poor. He who uses it in other than that commits a great falsehood and sin.

If the unjust ruler gives the zakat to the undeserving, it is better and more cautious for those who have paid it and find in themselves the willingness to do so to pay it again directly to deserving people. But this is by no means obligatory.

If those who must pay the zakat can withhold it in whole or in part from the unjust ruler, they are permitted to do so, on condition that no sedition ensues and no act of disobedience to Allah, such as manifest lying, a false oath or anything similar. Also, they should make it their intention to save the ruler from the sin of misplacing the zakat, as well as to assist the poor in upholding their religious duties by giving them that which Allah has made theirs rightfully.

﴿وَبِاللَّهِ التَّوْفِيقُ﴾

Success comes from Allah.

Volunteer Charity

¹ Surah 9 at Taubat Verse 60

As for volunteer charity, spending in ways of goodness and benevolence, intending the good pleasure of Allah and wishing for His reward, so numerous are the verses and hadiths detailing the merits of this that they would be too lengthy to exhaust. Allah the Exalted say,

وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤْفَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ.

“Whatever of good, you give benefits to your souls, and you shall only do so seeking the sake of Allah. Whatever good you give, shall be rendered back to you, and you shall not be dealt with unjustly.”¹

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.

“Those who spend in charity of their goods by night and day, in secret and public, have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”²

The Exalted say,

آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُسْتَحْلِفِينَ فِيهِ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْفَقُوا لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ.

“Believe in Allah and His messenger, and spend in charity out of what he has entrusted to you. For, those of you who believe and spend in charity for them is a great Reward.”³

The Exalted say,

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ.

“Who is he that will lend Allah a good loan? for (Allah) will multiply it many times to his credit, and he will have a generous Reward.”⁴

Imagine in your mind this wage that Allah calls great and generous, what a wage shall this be! Also, multiplication was not restricted by Allah to a specific number of times, for He says, “He shall multiply it many times” for him.

¹ Suruh 2 Al Baqara Verse 272.

² Surah 2 Al Baraqa Verse 274.

³ Surah 57 Al Hadid Verse 7.

⁴ Surah 57 Al Hadid Verse 11.

فَيُضَاعِفُهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً.

And in another verse,

“Which Allah will double to his credit and multiply many times,”¹

Allah says many times and does not specify their number. What encouragement can exceed this, coming from the Liberal, the Generous? How unfortunate is he who is incapable of grasping Allah’s intention or understanding His verses, so much so that possessiveness overcomes him and he withholds in a miserly fashion what Allah has favoured him with! And this may even reach the point where he withholds volunteer charity but obligatory expenditure. Had such a person been poor, it would have been better and safer for him.

May blessings and peace be upon him, said of the merits of charitable expenditure, that Allah Exalted is He, says,

“Son of Adam! Spend, and I shall spend upon you.” إِبْنَ آدَمَ أَنْفَقْ أَنفَقَ عَلَيْكَ.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
مَا طَلَعَتِ الشَّمْسُ إِلَّا وَعَلَى جَنَبَيْهَا مَلَكَانِ، يَقُولُ أَحَدُهُمَا: اللَّهُمَّ اعْطِ مُنْفِقًا خَلْفًا،
وَيَقُولُ الْآخَرُ: اللَّهُمَّ اعْطِ مُنْسِكًا تَلْفًا.

“Morning never comes upon the people without two angels coming to their sides, one of whom says, “Allah! Compensate him who expends, while the other says, Allah! Cause damage to him who withholds.”

In my opinion, the prayers of angels are assured of acceptance [mustajab].

But if the wealth of him who withholds is not seen to suffer, it is nevertheless damaged in reality, for he will benefit little from it, either in this world or in the hereafter, it is even worse than visible damage.

May blessings and peace be upon him, said,
مَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِعَدْلِ تَمَرٍ مِنْ كَسْبٍ طَيِّبٍ وَلَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْخُذُهَا بِيَمِينِهِ

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 245.

فَيَرْيِيهَا لَهُ كَمَا يُرِيِّي أَحَدُكُمْ فَلَوْهُ حَتَّى تَكُونَ مِثْلَ الْجَبَلِ.

“Whoever gives in a charity of a single date from something he has earned in a goodly manner and Allah accepts only that which is good, the All-Merciful shall keep it and increase it for him, just as one of you looks after his newborn horse, till it becomes like mountains.”

The same was said for a piece of halal bread or similar food, halal being the only kind that Allah accepts. Following another narration. And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ، إِنَّكَ أَنْ تَبْذُلَ الْفَضْلَ خَيْرٌ لَكَ، وَأَنْ تُمَسِّكَهُ شَرٌّ لَكَ، وَلَا تُثْلِمَ عَلَى كَفَافٍ،
وَابْذَأْ بِمَنْ تَعُولُ، وَالْيَدُ الْعُلْيَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْيَدِ السُّفْلَى.

“O Son of Adam! Surely if you spend from your excess, it will be better for you, while to withhold it is worse for you. You shall not incur any blame if all you possess is just the necessary. You should begin by spending on those you are responsible for. The upper hand is better than the lower hand.”

In my opinion: By excess, the Prophet means that portion of your wealth which is more than what is necessary. By necessary, he means the minimum needed. By those for whom you are the provider he means those whose expenses are your responsibility and whom you are not permitted to neglect or fail to provide them with their expenses, leaving them in need, while at the same time giving to others. By upper hand he means the hand that gives. He states that it is better than the hand that accepts to encourage people to guard their independence, avoid as much as possible having to ask or need others. However, if really in need, he who accepts receives as much reward as he who gives. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا لِّذِي يَأْخُذُ عَنْ حَاجَةٍ بِأَقَلِّ ثَوَابًا مِنَ الَّذِي يُعْطَى مِنْ سَعَةٍ.

“He who accepts due to necessity receives no less a reward than he who gives out of affluence.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ. فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فَبِكَلِمَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ.

“Protect yourselves against the Fire, with even as little as half a date. If you possess not even that, then with a good word.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الصَّدَقَةُ تُطْفِئُ الْحَطِيبَةَ كَمَا يُطْفِئُ الْمَاءُ النَّارَ

“Charity extinguishes sin, just as water extinguishes the fire.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

يُخْشِرُ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْرَى مَا كَانُوا قَطُّ، وَأَجْوَعَ مَا كَانُوا قَطُّ، وَأَعْطَشَ مَا كَانُوا قَطُّ، وَأَنْصَبَ مَا كَانُوا قَطُّ، فَمَنْ كَسَا لِلَّهِ كِسَاهُ اللَّهِ، وَمَنْ أَطْعَمَ لِلَّهِ أَطْعَمَهُ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ سَقَى لِلَّهِ سَقَاهُ اللَّهُ.

“The people shall be gathered on Resurrection Day more naked, hungrier, thirstier and wearier than they had ever been. He who had clothed others for the sake of Allah, Allah shall clothe him. He who had fed others for the sake of Allah, Allah shall feed him. He who had given to drink to others for the sake of Allah, Allah shall give him to drink.”

For the sake of Allah means that it was done truly seeking the pleasure of Allah, with no trace of ostentation, pretence or desire for praise from others. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ أَطْعَمَ أَخَاهُ حَتَّى يُشْبِعَهُ، وَسَقَاهُ مِنَ الْمَاءِ حَتَّى يَرْوِيَهُ، بَعَدَهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّارِ سَبْعَ خَنَادِقَ، مَا بَيْنَ كُلِّ خَنَدَقٍ مَسِيرَةُ مِائَةِ عَامٍ.

“He who feeds his brother until he is satiated gives him water to drink until his thirst quenched, Allah removes him away from the Fire the width of seven trenches; the distance between each of these two trenches being five hundred years.”

Many other hadiths exist as to the merits of feeding people and giving them water to drink, so strive to do this with diligence and do not go feebly about it.

A Little Charity Yet A Huge Reward

You should know even a little is great in the sight of Allah. Every act of goodness is a charity. Never disdain any act of goodness to the extent of failing to do it. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ مِنَ الْمَعْرُوفِ شَيْئًا، وَلَوْ أَنْ تَلْقَى أَخَاكَ بِوَجْهِ طَلِقٍ

Do not belittle any act of goodness, even as simple as to meet your brother with a good demeanour.

Give a charity every day, however small and start early in the day with your charity, for tribulation is unable to bypass charity. The meaning here is that the charity acts as a barrier between you and the tribulations that were set to befall you. Should a beggar come to you, never send him away disappointed, but give him something however small. Should you choose not to or are unable to, beware of rebuking or insulting him but send him away gently and amiably. If a person rebukes the beggar in such a manner that was the person to give the beggar half his wealth, equal the sin of that rebuke. Never refuse the first person who comes soliciting from you; beware of this!

Begin Charity with Your Close Ones

When you give charity, begin with your poor relatives, blood relations and your needy neighbours, for they are more deserving than others, and the reward for giving them is greater and more abundant. The Prophet may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

الصَّدَقَةُ عَلَى الْأَقَارِبِ صَدَقَةٌ وَصِلَةٌ.

“Charity to the close ones (relatives and neighbours) is both charity and maintaining ties [*silaturRahim*].”

And, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

الْمُنْعَدِي فِي الصَّدَقَةِ كَمَا نَعَهَا.

“Those who bypass with his charity is as he who has withheld it.”

“Bypassing” means giving strangers and other faraway people, while being aware that relatives and neighbours are more in need.

Charity in Private

It is incumbent that you make your charity private and in secret, for it is stated in hadith that its reward is seventy times that of publicly donated charity.

He may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

صَدَقَةُ السِّرِّ تُطْفِئُ غَضَبَ الرَّبِّ.

“Secret charity extinguishes the Lord's wrath.”

What can be more threatening than His wrath, Transcendent and Exalted is He? Secret charity extinguishes it only because it is so great in His sight, Transcendent and Exalted is He. Allah, the Exalted say,

إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ.

“If you disclose acts of charity, they are still excellent, but if you conceal them, and make them reach those really in need, that is best for you: It will remove from you some of your stains of evil. And Allah is well aware of what you do.”¹

Secret charity is better because it is more likely to be sincere, and sincerity is the spirit of good deeds. It is less likely to be subject to showing off which ruins good deeds. So, you should be aware of showing off in your charity and all your other good deeds. Beware of showing the poor how obliged you expect them to be, for there are severe threats against such behaviour.

Do not request those to whom you give to do something for you or serve or respect you. For if you do, this will be the only reward that you will receive. Our virtuous ancestors used to reward the poor who prayed for them, having received their charity, by giving them an equal amount of prayers, to avoid their rewards being diminished is just being thoroughly cautious.

Likewise, you should not request the poor gratitude or praise you,

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara 271.

nor to mention to others what you have given, for this will either diminish or altogether cancel your reward.

Do not refrain from the charity for fear of poverty or loss of wealth, for he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“Charity does not reduce wealth.” مَا نَقَصَ مَالٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ.

On the contrary, charity is that which attracts wealth and affluence and protects from poverty and need. Refraining from charity brings about the opposite, it attracts poverty and drives away affluence Allah Exalted is He says, وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ.

“Whatever you expend, He will compensate for it; for He is the Best of those who grant Sustenance.”¹

You should know that for the poor to give a small amount is better in the sight of Allah from the wealthy giving much.

He, may blessing and peace be upon him, said,

“One Dirham has outstripped a thousand Dirhams.” سَبَقَ دِرْهَمٌ أَلْفَ دِرْهَمٍ.

They asked him, “How is that?” He may blessings and peace be upon him replied,

رَجُلٌ لَا يَمْلِكُ إِلَّا دِرْهَمَيْنِ تَصَدَّقَ بِأَحَدِهِمَا، وَرَجُلٌ تَصَدَّقَ مِنْ عَرَضٍ مَالِهِ بِأَلْفِ دِرْهَمٍ فَسَبَقَ الدَّرْهَمُ الْأَلْفَ.

“A man who possessed only two Dirhams gave one in charity. And another man who gave in charity a thousand Dirhams from his wealth. This one Dirham has outstripped the thousand.”

One Dirham from the poor becomes can be better than a hundred thousand from the wealthy and affluent.

Forbidden to Contempt the Poor

It is blameworthy and forbidden to reproach or shame the poor for their poverty or despise them for poverty is the garment of Prophets

¹ Surah 34 Saba Verse 39.

and the attribute of the elect. The same applies to actions toward them with arrogance, belittling them, making light of their rights, or giving precedence to the rich over them for worldly reasons. All these are forbidden crimes, so beware of them.

You should honour and respect people according to their esteem for Allah and His Messenger, their upholding His religion, and their knowledge of His rights regards whether they are rich or poor.

Should they happen to be equal as concerns religious matters, the poor should be treated better because they are poor, broken-hearted, and likely to be ignored by most people, for the latter are heedless and tend to esteem the rich as a result of their esteem for the worldly things in their possession.

You must give charity and expend of the possession that you love best to attain goodness. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ.

“You shall never attain goodness till you expend of what you love.”¹

Commentators have said that the goodness here referred to is no other than the Garden. You must prefer others to yourself, which means that when you possess something which you need, you must nevertheless give it to a needy brother believer. You shall thus be one of the successful, who are those who will ultimately triumph. Allah Exalted is He says,

وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ.

“They prefer others to themselves even though they are in need. Whoever protected from the self-materialism, those are the ‘successful’.”²

You should rejoice when someone solicits at your door, for he is Allah’s the Exalted gift to you. He has a right due to him, even were he to come on horseback, as has been transmitted. The least you can do is send him away in a gracious manner.

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 92.

² Surah 59 Al Hashr Verse 9.

Give the beggar with your hand, if not every time then sometimes, for the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him used to give them with his noble hand, because Allah receives the donation with His Holy Hand from the hand of the giver. The hadith states that it falls into Allah's Hand before reaching the recipients.

As He Exalted is He, says,

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ.
“Know they not that Allah does accept repentance from His votaries and receives their gifts of charity, and that Allah is verily He, the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful?”¹

Manners for the Poor

As for the poor, they should endure their poverty with patience, be satisfied with what Allah has chosen to give them and contented with His decree to make them poor. They must beware of being anxious, panicky or resentful. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْفُقَرَاءِ، أَعْطُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قُلُوبِكُمْ الرِّضَا، تَضْفَرُوا بِثَوَابِ فَقَرِكُمْ وَإِلَّا فَلَا.

“O gathering poor people! Present to Allah contentment in your hearts, and you will receive the reward for poverty. Otherwise, you will not.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْفُقَرَاءُ الصَّبْرُ جُلَسَاءُ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“That poor who are patient shall be with Allah on Resurrection Day.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

كَادَ الْفَقْرُ أَنْ يَكُونَ كُفْرًا.
“Poverty is not far from being disbelief.”

In my opinion, this is when the poor person is angry with Allah's decree and discontented with what He has given him. He may even fall into the calamity of objecting to Allah's the Exalted, decision to prefer some of His servants over others in provision. When a poor person is devoid of patience as well as of knowledge of Allah, he may be in danger

¹ Surah 9 at-Taubah Verse 104.

of falling into this.

The poor person should be thankful to Allah and to those servants of Allah who help him.

He may blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَا يَشْكُرُ اللَّهَ مَنْ لَا يَشْكُرُ النَّاسَ.

“He has not thanked Allah, who has not thanked people.”

Thus, the poor should praise those benevolent towards them and pray for them. May blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ قَالَ لِمَنْ أَسَدَى إِلَيْهِ مَعْرُوفًا: جَزَاكَ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا فَقَدْ أَبْلَغَ فِيءَ الشَّيْءِ.

“He who says to the person who has rendered him kindness, “May Allah reward you well”, he has thanked him abundantly.”

The poor person should neither disparage nor defame he who gives him nothing, for this would be blameworthy to the extreme. In reality, no one gives nor withholds but Allah the Exalted. Creatures are subjected to His will, and He does with them as He pleases.

Let the poor person beware of being constantly looking to other people, desiring their help, and coveting what they possess, for greed is in itself instant poverty. He who places his hopes in other than Allah or attaches his heart to other than Him, he is a loser and a failure. So let him behave with decency and find his sufficiency in Allah. He, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ يَسْتَعْفِفُ يُعِفَّهُ اللَّهُ. وَمَنْ يَسْتَغْنِ يُعْنِهِ اللَّهُ.

“Whoever is satisfy not to ask, Allah will suffice him; and whoever is not in need, Allah renders him independent of others.”

He promises him sufficiency and freedom from need, should he behave with reserve and restraint. The promise of Allah and His Prophet is certain to be fulfilled.

Let the poor person beware of lying and saying, “So and so has given me, to deceive someone else into inducing him to give him”; or on the contrary say, “He has given me nothing!” When in fact he has given him, for fear that the second should not give him. Let him beware of

hiding whatever Allah has favoured him with and constantly complaining to people, exhibiting his neediness for all to see. Some poor persons may do this, imagining that those who hear them will be induced to give them. Should what they say be also lies, they would have sinned lying as well as that of acquiring things by deceit. Many poor persons may be afflicted with such things because of their ignorance and greed for what other people possess.

Begging Only in Dire Straits

Soliciting is exceedingly blameworthy except in dire need. It is considered obscenity, and it has been related that it is the only obscenity deemed permissible. The Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَا تَزَالُ الْمَسْأَلَةُ بِأَحَدِكُمْ حَتَّى يَلْقَى اللَّهَ وَلَيْسَ فِي وَجْهِهِ مُرْعَةُ لَحْمٍ.

“One of you will continue to beg until he meets Allah, and there will be not a piece of flesh left on his face.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَا تَحِلُّ الْمَسْأَلَةُ لِعَنِي وَلَا لِذِي مِرَّةٍ سَوِيٍّ.

“Begging is not licit for those not in need nor who is strong and healthy.”

The meaning of this hadith is that whoever is in no need is he who does possess some money or has a relative willing to help him and is thus not obliged to beg. Whoever is strong and able to work and earn, but instead begs sins. Begging is forbidden for him. As for he who gives him, he never sins, but on the contrary is rewarded for his donation. No donation is ever sinful unless it is given to one whom you know will use it illicitly or disobedience against Allah. You should know that!

You should beware, may Allah have mercy on you and warn your brother Muslims not to solicit from people when not in need. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said

لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ مَا فِي الْمَسْأَلَةِ مَا مَشَى أَحَدٌ إِلَى أَحَدٍ يَسْأَلُهُ.

“Were you to know what soliciting means, no man would ever go to another to ask him for something!”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said

مَسْأَلَةُ الْغَنِيِّ نَارٌ، إِنْ قَلِيلٌ، وَإِنْ كَثِيرٌ فَكَثِيرٌ.

“For a person not in need, soliciting is a fire, small if small, great if great.”

I say: Not in need does not mean one who has much money, but one who can earn, or has a little to suffice his immediate needs.

If ever you are forced to solicit, avoid being demand or insistent, let your heart concentrate on Allah, asking of Him. Once you are given what is sufficient for the immediate situation, refrain from further requests, thank he who has given you, and excuse he who has not, for nothing in the latter's possession had been allotted to you. Had that been the case, he would not have been able to withhold it from you. Do not solicit from someone standing amongst other people, to embarrass him before them so that he would give you. Imam al'Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, when speaking of a man soliciting in public and giving a donation out of embarrassment which he would not have given in private, says that for the recipient, that which is taken in this manner, through embarrassment, although licit in outward appearance, is in reality illicit for the recipient. Were you to be given something without having asked nor desired it, take it and do not refuse it, especially if you need it. You may refuse it if you feel that doing so is better for your religion or your heart. However, if you refuse for the sake of acquiring a reputation so that it be said that you refuse worldly things, then you have a problem. So you should beware of this. Accept nothing illicit, nor strongly suspect, even if it comes to you without asking. Know this and be wise.

﴿وَبِاللّهِ التَّوْفِيقُ﴾

Success comes from Allah.

﴿وَهُوَ حَسْبُنَا وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾

He is our sufficiency and the best of guardians.

Chapter Five

Fasting

O Brothers, you should know, may Allah ease us into what is easy, protect us from what is hard, forgive us in the hereafter and this life that the month of Ramadan is a month of immense importance and rank in the sight of Allah and His Messenger. It is the master of all months. Allah made it obligatory upon Muslims to fast it. The Exalted says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

“O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may learn self-restraint and Allah-Fearing.”¹

Allah revealed His Book in the month of Ramadan and made one of its nights, the Night of Worth [*Laylatul Qadr*], better than a thousand months, better therefore than more than eighty-three years. Do give this due reflection. What may this night be that is better and more superior in the sight of Allah than this long period? He, Exalted is He, says,

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ.

“The month of Ramadan in which the Quran was sent down, a guidance for the people and clear signs of guidance and discernment.”²

Then He, Transcendent is He, says,

¹ Surah 2 Verse 183.

² Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 185.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ . وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ . لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ حَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ .
تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ . سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ .

“We have indeed revealed it in the Night of Power: And what will explain to you what the night of power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein the angels and Spirit descend, by Allah's permission, on every command. Peace! This until the rise of dawn!”¹

Thus, Transcendent is He, did make it known to us that the Quran was sent down in Ramadan, specifically in the Night of Worth. This sending down was from the Guarded Tablet [*al-Lawh al-Mahfuz*] to the House of Might [*Bayt al-Izza*] in the Terrestrial Heaven. The entire Quran was sent down to the House of Might on that night, then revealed portion by portion by the trustworthy Gabriel, at Allah's command, to His Messenger, may peace be upon them, over a period of about twenty three years, which is the period of revelation to the Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him for the first revelation came from Allah when he was forty, and he died at the age of sixty-three. This is what has been stated by scholars of Authority, both the early ones and the latecomers.

Excellence of Ramadan

Concerning the excellence of Ramadan, the Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

رَمَضَانَ إِلَى رَمَضَانَ وَالْجُمُعَةَ إِلَى الْجُمُعَةِ وَالصَّلَاةُ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ مُكَفِّرَاتٌ لِّمَا بَيْنَهُنَّ إِذَا اجْتَنِبْتَ الْكَبَائِرَ .

“Ramadan to Ramadan, Friday prayers to Friday prayers and ritual prayer to ritual prayer, these requite sins, so long as major sins are avoided.”

About Ramadan, may blessings and peace upon him, also said,

هُوَ شَهْرُ الصَّبْرِ، وَالصَّبْرُ ثَوَابُهُ الْجَنَّةُ .

It is the month of patience, and the reward for patience is the Garden?

¹ Surah 97 Al Qadr Verses 1-5.

And he said in the same hadith,

أَوَّلُهُ رَحْمَةٌ وَأَوْسَطُهُ مَغْفِرَةٌ، وَآخِرُهُ عِتْقٌ مِنَ النَّارِ.

“Its beginning is mercy, its middle is forgiveness, and its end is freedom from the Fire.”

Verily, Allah the Exalted sends His watch over the Muslims on the first night of it. Whoever, upon whom He gazes He never torments; then He forgives them on the last night. In a narration, once Gabriel said to the Messenger of Allah, upon them be peace, whoever upon which Ramadan comes, and he is not forgiven, may Allah banish him! Say, Ameen! The Messenger of Allah may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said, Ameen!

In my opinion, this is because in Ramadan everything that leads to forgiveness is made easier than in other months, so much so that only he is not forgiven are those who turn away from Allah excessively and whose impudence is great, for only thus will he deserve remoteness and banishment from before the gate of Allah. We ask Allah for safety from His wrath, torment and every other hardship. It has been transmitted that the gates of the sky and those of the Garden are kept open in Ramadan, while those of the Fire are locked. The demons among jinn are shackled and cast into the seas so that unable to spoil the Muslims Fasting and Night Prayers and every night a herald cries, O seeker of goodness make haste! O seeker of evil, retreat! It has also been transmitted that an obligatory act of worship offered to Allah the Exalted in Ramadan will equal seventy such acts at other times, while a supererogatory act will equal an obligatory act offered at other times. It is about the reward they attract that the supererogatory devotions of Ramadan are equal to obligatory ones at other times, while its obligatory devotions are multiplied seventy times. He may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ وَقَامَهُ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

“He who fasts in Ramadan and keeps vigil out of faith and sincerity surely all his past sins will be forgiven.”

I say: Faith [*imam*] means to believe in Allah's promise, while sincerity [*ihtisab*] is to have no other intention but Allah. Allah knows best.

Manners of Fasting

There are good manners for the fast, without which it is incomplete. Among the most important are that one keeps one's tongue from lying and backbiting, as well as from what does not concern one, to keep one's eyes and ears from looking at or listening to that which is prohibited or that which is superfluous. One should also keep forbidden and suspect food from reaching one's stomach, especially at the time of breaking the fast, at which time one should do one's utmost to eat nothing but halal food. One of our virtuous ancestors said, "When you fast, observe what you break your fast with and in whose house. Indicating that one should be circumspect and careful about what one breaks one's fast with. He who fasts should also guard all his bodily members, first from sin, then from unnecessary things, this is how fasting becomes complete and pure. How many a person may fast, suffer the hardship of hunger and thirst, yet because he does not restrain his bodily members from sin spoils his fast. Just as he, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

كَمْ مِنْ صَائِمٍ لَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ صِيَامِهِ إِلَّا الْجُوعُ وَالْعَطَشُ.

"How many persons fast yet gains nothing but hunger and thirst?"

To refrain from sin is always mandatory, for fasting and non-fasting persons alike. However, it is more emphatically incumbent upon the fasting person, more of a duty for him. So understand! He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الصَّوْمُ جَنَّةٌ. فَإِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ صَوْمٍ أَحَدِكُمْ فَلَا يَرْفُثْ وَلَا يَفْسُقْ وَلَا يَجْهَلْ، فَإِنْ أَمَرُوهُ شَاتَمَهُ أَوْ قَاتَلَهُ فَلْيُثَلِّثْ إِنْ صَائِمٌ.

"Fasting is protection (from the Fire). When it is a day of fasting for you, let him refrain from lewd speech and quick-tempered reactions. Should a man insult him or quarrel with him, let him say, I am fasting."

It is good manners for the fasting person not to sleep too much by day, nor eat too much by night. Let him be moderate in both, that he may

feel some hunger and thirst, that his soul may be disciplined, his appetites weakened, and his heart illuminated, this is the secret and purpose of fasting. Let him avoid luxuries and, as we have just said, excess in indulging his appetites and pleasures. The least he can do is not to exceed in Ramadan his habitual degree of comfort at other times. However, self-discipline and refraining from indulging the appetites of one's self [*nafs*] have a great effect in illuminating the heart and are more incumbent in Ramadan.

As for those who make Ramadan a time for self-indulgence and pleasures that go beyond their habitual practice at other times, they are being deceived by the Devil, for he is jealous of them and wishes to deprive them of the blessings of the fast and prevent its effects from appearing on them in the form of lights and unveilings, humility and brokenness before Allah the Exalted, and the pleasure of intimate discourse [*munajat*] with Him, reciting His Book and invoking Him.

Our virtuous ancestors may Allah have mercy on them used to reduce their habitual and their pleasurable activities in Ramadan, while increasing their good deeds, this was their normal pattern at all times, but they intensified it even further in Ramadan.

It is good manners not to be overly concerned with worldly affairs during the month of Ramadan. One should free oneself for the worship and constant remembrance of Allah, and not engage in any worldly endeavour unless it is strictly necessary, either for oneself or those for whom one is responsible, such as children and so on.

Ramadan among months is similar to Friday among days. A believer should devote both that day and that month to his life-to-come.

It is of the Sunna to hasten to break one's fast, that it be done with dates, or if dates are unavailable, with water. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, used to break his fast before praying Maghrib. He said,

لَا تَزَالُ أُمَّتِي بِخَيْرٍ مَا عَجَّلُوا الْفِطْرَ وَأَخَّرُوا السَّحُورَ.

“My nation shall remain in a good state so long as they hasten with breaking their fast and delay their morning meal [*sahur*].”

Therefore, delaying *sahur* is also a Sunna. The fasting person should eat in moderation so that the effects of fasting may show on him, and he may attain it's secret and goal, which are disciplining the soul and weakening its appetites. Hunger and an empty stomach have a great effect in illuminating the heart and infusing the bodily members with energy for worship. On the contrary, satiety is at the origin of hardness and distraction for the heart, and laziness in obedience thus worship. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا مَلَأَ ابْنُ آدَمَ وَعَاءَ شَرًّا مِنْ بَطْنِهِ حَسْبُ ابْنِ آدَمَ لَقِيمَاتٍ يُقِمْنَ صُلْبَهُ، فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا مَحَالَةَ فُتِلَتْ لِطْعَامِهِ وَتِلَتْ لِشَرَابِهِ وَ تِلَتْ لِنَفْسِهِ.

“The Son of Adam never fills a vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the Son of Adam to have a few morsels of food enough to keep his back straight. If this is not enough for him, then a third for his food, a third for his beverage, and a third for his breath.”

Someone said, “When the stomach is satiated, all the limbs go hungry, but when the stomach is hungry, the limbs will be satiated.”

In my opinion: Hunger for the members is to demand and insist on satisfying their appetites. The tongue desires to talk, the eye to look, the ear to listen, and so on. They are only moved to demand what is more than their needs when the stomach is full. On the other hand, when it is empty, they become quiet and tranquil, which is expressed as the “satiety of the members”, an observable fact. And Allah knows best.

It is strongly recommended to invite those about to break their fast by offering them something, preferably dates if possible, if not water. Upon him be blessings and peace, said,

مَنْ فَطَّرَ صَائِمًا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أَجْرِهِ شَيْءٌ

“He at whose hands a fasting person breaks his fast shall receive an equal reward, without this diminishing his reward wage in any way.

The above means that the reward of the fasting person remains undiminished. This reward belongs to him at whose hands serve to broke the fast, even if only with water. As for he who feeds a fasting person

who has already broken his fast, whether by inviting him to his house or elsewhere, he does not receive this particular reward, but that of feeding people, which is also immense, and that, equally great, of feeding the fasting person to satiety, should he offer him enough food to satiate him fully.

Tarawih Prayers

The *Tarawih* Prayers every night of *Ramadan* is a *Sunna*. The custom of the virtuous ancestors, may Allah have mercy on them, was to divide the Quran into parts, one of which to be recited every night, to complete it during one of the last nights of the month. He who can emulate them in this, let him be diligent. Indeed, good comes in opportunities that must be seized, as He the Exalted say,

وَمَا تَقْذَرُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ.

“Whatever good you send forth for yourself, you shall find it in Allah's Presence.”¹

He who is unable to emulate them, let him beware of shortening his prayers excessively, as many ignorant people do with *Tarawih*, to the extent that they may miss some of the obligatory parts of the prayer, such as not pausing [*tuma 'ninah*] at all during bowing down or prostrating, or reciting the Surah Fatiha so quickly that it comes out incorrectly. In the sight of Allah, such people have neither prayed, won the reward nor abandoned the prayer altogether, thereby feeling neglectful, which feeling keeps them safe from self-admiration, such similar things are among the greatest deceptions of the Devil for believers. He allows one of them to perform the act but causes it to become nullified. So beware of this and be attentive, O brothers!

When you pray *Tarawih* you should complete your standing up, recitation, bowing, prostration, humility, presence and all other duties and courtesies just like the compulsory [*fardu*] prayers. Do not let the Devil sway over you, for he has no power over those who believe and rely on their Lord, so be of those. His authority is over those who take

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 110, same as, Surah 73 Al Muzzammil Verse 20.

him for an ally and associate others with Allah. So do not be one of those!

Strive to make your acts of goodness and benevolence as abundant as you can in *Ramadan*, for it is a blessed time when rewards are multiplied, the reward is abundant, and good works are made easy.

Commit to much Divine Worship in *Ramadan*

There is multiplication of rewards in *Ramadan*, and it has been transmitted that a supererogatory [*nawafil*] devotion attracts a reward equal to that of an obligatory [*fardu*] of the same kind at any other time, while an obligatory devotion equals seventy such devotions performed at other times. Why should one miss such profit and be too lazy to seize the opportunity of such a transaction, one that can never lose?

As for good works being made easy, it is because the self that incites to evil is imprisoned by hunger and thirst, and the devils that discourage people from good works and place obstacles before them are shackled, unable to spread corruption. Therefore, nothing stands between one and divine good deeds, no barriers exist, save for those who are overcome by their wretchedness and misfortune, may Allah protect us! For such people, *Ramadan* is similar to any other time. They are ever forgetful of Allah. Some may even become more forgetful and distracted in *Ramadan*.

Just as the believer should intensify his divine good deeds in the month of *Ramadan* and show diligence, so should he be extremely careful to avoid transgressions and maintain himself at a distance from them, for sins committed during blessed times are much worse and deserving of much more severe punishment, as a counterpart for the multiplication of rewards for good works at those same times.

The Excellence of the Last Ten Days And the Night of *Lailatul Qadr*

It has been transmitted that he may blessings and peace be upon him, used to strive hard in his divine worships more in *Ramadan* than other months, then intensifies even more in the last ten days and nights.

In my opinion, this is because of the superior merit of the last ten days and nights of the month, and his may blessings and peace be upon him, instructed to seek *Laylatul Qadr* in them. Scholars have stated further that it is more likely to be one of the odd nights. In brief, the sagacious believer should be ready for *Laylatul Qadr* every Ramadan night. He must remain watchful and constantly engaged in good deeds. It is important that when it does come it finds him absorbed in his divine good deeds, remembering Allah the Exalted, neither distracted, heedless, nor absorbed in frivolity. It is unimportant whether he witnesses *Laylatul Qadr* or not, for the deeds of he who is absorbed in devotions during it will be equivalent to the works of a thousand months, whether he is aware or not which specific night it is. We say: He should watch for it and be prepared every night of the month because much disagreement exists between scholars as to which night it is. Some have gone so far as to say that it is hidden and can be any night in the month; also, it shifts and is not the same night every year. I am inclined to accept this last opinion. I believe it can occur in other than the last ten nights, but less frequently, this is also the opinion of the majority of scholars.

Charitable Deeds and Seclude in the Mosque [Ittikaf]

You should increase acts of charities, assistance and comfort to the poor and needy, and inquire after the widows and the orphans in this noble month. It has been transmitted that he may blessings and peace be upon him, was always more openhanded with donations than a whirlwind, but was more so than ever in *Ramadan*.

One should increase one's recitations and study of the Quran, secluding oneself in mosques [Ittikaf], especially during the last ten days, which is the time when he may blessings and peace be upon him, secluded himself.

And know that the month of *Ramadan* is one that has always been charged with blessings for the Muslims. On the seventeenth of *Ramadan*, the Battle of Badr occurred. It is known as the Day of Decision, the day the two factions met. Also, the conquest of Mecca, the Honorable occurred *Ramadan*, and people entered the religion of Allah in large

groups. In it comes *Laylatul Qadr*, which is better than a thousand months, so that he who is engaged in devotions during it for twelve years will be as if he has spent a thousand years worshipping Allah. Can there be anything more tremendous and of more worth than this? How many are the benedictions and graces of *Ramadan*! Blessed is he who recognises its worth, seizes the chance to profit from its days and hours and remains engaged throughout its nights and days in that which draws him nearer to his Lord, this is Allah's favour which He grants to whom He will. Allah's favour is immense.

Supererogatory Fasts

You should know that the best merits for fasts are in *Ramadan*, and the same applies to every other obligatory act of worship, for they are all more meritorious in *Ramadan* than at other times. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said that Allah say,

مَا تَقَرَّبَ الْمُتَقَرِّبُونَ إِلَيَّ بِمِثْلِ آدَاءِ مَا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ. وَلَا يَزَالُ الْعَبْدُ يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالتَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ.

“My servant draws nearer to Me with nothing better than what I have prescribed as obligatory for him, but My servant does not cease to draw nearer to Me with supererogatory [*nawafil*] devotions of free will until I love him.” (Till the end of the hadith.)

Next in merit is fasting during the four Sacred Months, *Dhul Qada*, *Dhul hijjah*, *Muharram* and *Rajab*. Allah the Exalted says,

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ.

“The number of months with Allah is twelve months, as ordained in the Book of Allah, on the day when He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred.”¹

It has been transmitted that fasting one day in the Sacred Months is equivalent to fasting thirty days at other times and fasting one day in

¹ Surah 9 at-Taubah Verse 36.

Ramadan is equivalent to fasting thirty days in the Sacred Months. It has also been transmitted he who fasts three consecutive days in any of the Sacred Months, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Allah shall pull him away from the Fire.

It is a *sunnah* to fast six days in *Syawwal*, after *Ramadan* is over, to bid the latter farewell and compensate for any deficiency in one's fast, for supererogatory devotions compensate for deficiencies in obligatory ones. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَهُ سِتًّا مِنْ شَوَّالٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا صَامَ الدَّهْرَ كُلَّهُ.

“He who fasts *Ramadan* then follows it up with six from *Syawwal*, and he will be as if he had been fasting uninterruptedly.”

It is meritorious to fast the Day of Arafat, which is the Day of Hajj, the ninth of *Dhul Hijjah*. It has been transmitted that to fast it is equivalent to fasting two years. Scholars have said that it is the best day of the year in which one can fast, except for *Ramadan*, but that it is not recommended for pilgrims to fast it, so that they may retain their strength for *dua* during the Gathering and the other rites. Next in merit is the Day of *Ashuraa*, which is the tenth day of *Muharram*. It has been transmitted that to fast it expiates the sins of a full year.

It is strongly recommended to fast three days every month. Many hadiths exist to the effect that they are the equivalent of a continuous fast. It is better and more meritorious for the person wishing to fast to make them the White Days, since it has been related that the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, never omitted to fast the White Days, whether he was at home or travelling. These are the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth of every month, and should be given priority. However, to fast any other three days is also good, even if not consecutively. Those people intent on worshipping should never neglect to fast three days every month since the fast will be light, but of immense merit. It should suffice you to know that they would be the equivalent of a continuous fast. The Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, recommended it to a number of his Companions, may Allah be

pleased with them. He said that Noah used to fast continuously, while David fasted half continuously, he used to fast one day and eat the next, and Abraham fasted continuously and broke his fast continuously, for he used to fast three days of every month. May Allah's blessings and peace be upon them all.

In my opinion, the most prefer manner of fasting is that of David, may peace be upon him, which is to fast one day and break one's fast the next. It is preferable than fasting continuously, as stated in many authentic hadiths. Imam al-Ghazali, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him, says, "It is more effective in disciplining the inner self and more powerful in opposing it than a continuous fast.

To fast every Monday and Thursday is also extremely meritorious. He may blessings and peace be upon him, used to fast them and say, "These are the two days on which divine deeds are presented to the Lord of all Beings. It pleases me that my divine deeds are presented even as I am fasting."

To fast on Friday is recommended, due to the merits and rank of that day, but on condition that it be paired with either Thursday or Saturday, for it has been transmitted that the Prophet, Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family, discouraged the people from fasting it on its own.

The Benefit of Fasting Regularly

Generally speaking, one should fast with regular frequency, for it is a most effective manner of disciplining the self and breaking its passion, in softening and illuminating the heart, and in refining the senses and imposing rectitude upon them. There is in it an immense reward and a generous recompense that has neither limit nor end.

The recompense for every divine deed is known except for fasting its reward is neither determined nor limited. The Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, his family and companions said,

كُلُّ عَمَلٍ ابْنِ آدَمَ يُضَاعَفُ لَهُ الْحَسَنَةُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا، قَالَ تَعَالَى: إِلَّا الصَّوْمَ فَإِنَّهُ لِي وَأَنَا أَجْزِي بِهِ، يَدْعُ الْإِنْسَانُ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ وَشَهْوَتَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِ لِبَاسٍ لِلصَّائِمِ فَرَحَتَانِ: فَرَحَةٌ عِنْدَ إِفْطَارِهِ وَفَرَحَةٌ عِنْدَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ. وَلَخُلُوفٌ فَمِ الصَّائِمِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَطْيَبُ مِنْ رِيحِ الْمِسْكِ.

“Every deed of the Son of Adam is multiplied tenfold. The Exalted said, “Except fasting, for it is Mine and I shall reward for it. A person will leave his food, beverage, and passionate desires for My sake.” The person who fast shall have two pleasures: The pleasure when he breaks his fast, and the pleasure when he meets his Lord. The bad odour of the fasting person’s mouth is more fragrant to Allah than the scent of musk.”

So, reflect profoundly, may Allah have mercy on you, the words of the Exalted, ‘Except fasting, for it is Mine and I shall reward for it.’ Reflect on the promise of limitless reward from the Generous, Liberal, and Compassionate Master. Reflect also on ‘the odour of the fasting person’s mouth being more fragrant to Allah than the scent of musk’ and ponder the meaning of being near to Allah which is the attribute of the fasting person.

In my opinion, because of this, it is discouraged to brush one’s teeth with *siwak* after midday and until sunset when one is fasting since it will diminish this odour or remove it altogether. May blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لِلْجَنَّةِ بَابٌ يُقَالُ لَهُ الرَّيَّانُ لَا يَدْخُلُهُ إِلَّا الصَّائِمُونَ، فَإِذَا دَخَلُوا مِنْهُ أُغْلِقَ.

“The Heaven has a door called Al Rayyan, no one enters it except those who fast, and once they have entered, it is locked.”

And, he may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,

الصَّوْمُ نِصْفُ الصَّبْرِ. وَلِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ زَكَاةٌ. وَزَكَاةُ الْجَسَدِ الصَّوْمُ.

“Fasting is half of patience. Everything has zakat due upon it. The zakat of the body is to fast.

And, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الصَّوْمُ جَنَّةٌ وَحِصْنٌ مِنَ النَّارِ.

“Fasting is a shield and a fortress protecting from the Fire.”

You should know that fasting has an outward form and an inward spirit. Its outward form is to refrain from eating, drinking and intercourse from before dawn until sunset, having first formed a specific intention. He who deliberately and knowingly eats, drinks or has intercourse during daytime annuls his fast. If he did so out of forgetfulness, ignorance and under coercion, he has not nullified his fast, and this is the outward form of the fast.

As for its inner spirit, it is to refrain from sins and prohibited acts and to neglect no obligation or duty. He who refrains from eating, drinking and intercourse, but does not refrain from contraventions will have gained nothing from his fast but pains and discomfort.

When you fast or engage in any other good deeds, do it well. Strive to perform all good deeds with excellence, perfection and sincerity so that Allah may allow you to profit from them and grant you the immense reward on the day when you return to Him.

﴿وَلَهُ سُبْحَانَهُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ﴾

Transcendent is He, to Him belongs all matters,

﴿فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ﴾

So, worship Him and rely on Him,

﴿وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

Your Lord is not unaware of all what you do.¹

﴿لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ﴾

There is no god, but He, to Him is the final end.²

¹ Surah 27 An Naml Verse 93.

² Surah 40 Ghaafir Verse 3.

Chapter Six

Pilgrimage

You should know O brothers, may Allah make you and us of those predestined for good fortune and those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah!” then were upright that the pilgrimage to Allah’s Sacred House [Hajj] is one of the pillars of Islam. It is an obligation that is mandatory once in a life-time for every Muslim capable of it, and so is the minor pilgrimage [Umra]. Allah Exalted is He says,

وَلِلّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ اِلَيْهِ سَبِيْلًا

“It is a duty to Allah for man to come to the House for pilgrimage, for those able to do so,”¹

Allah said to His Intimate Friend [khaliluhu], Abraham, may peace be upon him,

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ. لِّيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ. فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطِيعُوا أَوَاسِرَ الْفَقِيرِ. ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ. ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعِظْكُمْ حُرْمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ.

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 97.

“And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to you on foot and mounted on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways; That they may witness the benefits provided for them, and celebrate the name of Allah, through the Days appointed, over the cattle which He has provided for them for sacrifice: then eat you thereof and feed the distressed ones in want. Then let them complete the prescribed rites, perform their vows and circumambulate the Ancient House again. Such is the Pilgrimage: whoever honours the sacred rites of Allah, for him it will good in the Sight of his Lord.”¹

And the Messenger of Allah may Allah’s blessings, and peace be upon him, said,

مُنْبِي الْإِسْلَامَ عَلَى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ، وَالْحَجِّ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ.

Islam is built on five (pillars): The testimony that there is no god other than Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, the ritual prayer, zakat, going on pilgrimage to the House and fasting Ramadan.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ مَلَكَ زَادًا وَرَاحِلَةً ثُمَّ لَمْ يُحَجَّ فَلَا عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَمُوتَ إِنْ شَاءَ يَهُودِيًّا أَوْ نَصْرَانِيًّا.

“He who possesses provision and a mount that would allow him to reach the House of Allah the Exalted, then does not go on pilgrimage, it is equal to him if he dies a Jew if he so wishes or a Christian if he so wishes?”

There can be no more severe threat than that for he who neglects to go on pilgrimage when able to. A believer should not postpone, act lazily or procrastinate, producing excuses year after year, when he can go. How can he be sure that death will not overtake him or that he will lose the ability he now possesses. The pilgrimage obligation remains, and as a result, he will meet his Lord as a disobedient sinner.

Ability to Perform Hajj

The person who has ability must possess the provision and mount

¹ Surah 22 Al Hajj Verse 27-30.

that he will need in his pilgrimage journey on the way there and back, as well as whatever else is necessary, in addition to the expenses of such of his dependents as his wife and children until he returns. Ability varies with the variation in people and places, whether the latter is near or far. He who yearns so much for the Sacred House of Allah and is so eager to perform that religious obligation that he strains himself to go to for Hajj, although he is not able in every way, his faith is complete and his reward greater and more liberal. On condition, however, that none of Allah's the Exalted rights are wasted, either in the course of his journey or at home; otherwise, he would be guilty of disobedience and deserving of blame. Examples of this is that he sets out leaving without provision those whom Allah the Exalted made him responsible for, or depends on begging during his journey, thus his heart will be preoccupied with watching the people he hopes to beg from or that he neglects some of his obligatory ritual prayers because he is travelling or falls into something prohibited. The person who goes to pilgrimage in such a manner, when Allah has granted him permission not to when unable, is like he who builds a mansion but destroys a town.

We have drawn attention to this because many common people travel in this manner, thinking they are drawing nearer to Allah the Exalted by going to His House on pilgrimage, when in fact they are most remote from their aim since they have not entered the matter from the proper door. Because this is so for the obligatory pilgrimage [*Hajj*], it is even more reprehensible for supererogatory [*umrah*]. Everything we have just said applies to the weak and powerless. As for the strong and able, we have already said that he must hasten to perform his obligatory pilgrimage, after which it is recommended for him not to neglect supererogatory pilgrimages.

One of our ancestors, may Allah have mercy on him said, "The least he can do is never to allow more than five years to pass without going to pilgrimage once".

It has reached us that Allah, Exalted is He, said, "A servant to whom I grant good health in his body and ample provision, yet he lets

five years elapse without visiting Me, surely, he is deprived.”

In my opinion, the Muslim who has the ability to perform the pilgrimage should do so repeatedly because of what it entails as a manner of magnifying the sacred things of Allah and His rites, since the magnification of these is the piety of the heart and because of its immense merit, as has been stated in hadith. The Messenger of Allah, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“The Ultimate Jihad is Hajj.” أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ الْحَجُّ.

And, he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

“The Hajj obliterates whatever has preceded it.” إِنَّ الْحَجَّ يَهْدِمُ مَا قَبْلَهُ.

Which means the sins that have been committed before it. And, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ حَجَّ فَلَمْ يَرَفُثْ وَلَمْ يَفْسُقْ خَرَجَ مِنْ ذُنُوبِهِ كَيَوْمٍ وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ.

“He who performs the Hajj and avoid obscenity and corrupt behaviour, he will exit from his sins like the day his mother gave birth to him.”

Obscenity and corrupt include every possible reprehensible behaviour. And, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

الْعُمْرَةُ إِلَى الْعُمْرَةِ كَفَّارَةٌ لِمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَالْحَجَّ الْمَبْرُورُ لَيْسَ لَهُ جَزَاءٌ إِلَّا الْجَنَّةُ.

“An Umra to another Umra expiate the sins committed in between and the accepted Hajj has no other reward but the Heaven.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

بُرِّ الْحَجِّ إِطْعَامُ الطَّعَامِ وَلِينُ الْكَلَامِ.

“An accepted Hajj depended on feeding the people and speaking gently.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

الْحُجَّاجُ وَالْعُمْرَارُ وَفْدُ اللَّهِ، إِنْ سَأَلُوا أُعْطُوا، وَإِنْ دَعَوْا أُجِيبُوا، وَإِنْ أَنْفَقُوا أُخْلِفَ لَهُمْ.

“Those who perform Hajj and Umra are Allah’s guests. When they ask, they are given, when they pray, they are answered, and when they expend, they are compensated.”

Important of Using Halal Provisions

It is most important for those about to set out for the pilgrimage to do his utmost to make his provision halal and his expenses from a licit source. Whoever uses illicit money for the *Hajj*, Allah will not accept the worship. After he enters the state of *ihram*, and call to Allah, "I answer your call" [*Labbayk!*], Transcendent is He shall answer,

لَا لَبَيْكَ وَلَا سَعْدَيْكَ، زَادُكَ حَرَامٌ وَرَاحِلَتُكَ حَرَامٌ وَحُجَّتُكَ غَيْرُ مَبْرُورٍ .

"You have not answered my call! And no excellence for you! Your provision and mount are *haram*. Your pilgrimage has been rejected!"

For he who expends from a halal source for his *Hajj*, thus when he says, "*Labbayk!* Allah Exalted is He, will says,

لَبَيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ، زَادُكَ حَلَالٌ وَرَاحِلَتُكَ حَلَالٌ وَحُجَّتُكَ مَبْرُورٍ .

"You have answered my call! And excellence for you! Your provision and mount are *halal*. Your pilgrimage has been accepted!"

The above is transmitted in hadith. Let the pilgrim feel pleased when he spends his money in the course of his journey, for these are expenditures that he will be compensated for and the consequence of which will be goodness, benedictions, ease, and affluence. It has been transmitted that that which is spent on *Hajj* is similar to that spent on *Jihad*, the reward for every Dirham will be seven hundred.

If the pilgrim is wealthy, let him be liberal in giving to the poor and the destitute, in helping the weak and the needy, followed by all other Muslims. Let it be done sincerely for the Lord of the worlds.

Manner of the Hajj Pilgrim

During his journey, let him be humble, modest and submissive, and this is how he should approach Allah, the King [*Malik*], the Compeller [*Jabbar*] and the Glorious [*Mutakabbir*].

Behaving with arrogance or indulging in extreme forms of comfort will cause him to be rejected by Allah. He may blessings and peace be upon him said,

“Surely, the pilgrim is unkempt and dusty.” إِنَّمَا الْحَجُّ أَشْعَثُ أَغْبَرٌ.

When he, may blessings and peace be upon him, went on his Hajj, he used a worn-out saddle and sat on a cloth not worth four Dirhams. The most humble and modest the pilgrim, the poorer he looks for the sake of Allah, the better, purer, honourable and complete will his Hajj be. The Proof of Islam, al Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him said, “Allah made the Hajj journey in the likeness of the journey to the hereafter.” Therefore, one should bring to mind, with every act during the journey, the corresponding or equivalent act about the hereafter. When you bid your family and friends farewell, remember how you will bid them farewell in your last moments before death. When you prepare your provisions for the road, remember the provisions that have to be prepared for the hereafter. The long-distance that you travel together with the fear of wild animals and robbers should remind you of the road to the hereafter, the questioning by Munkar and Nakir, and the torment of the grave. Wrapping the ihram clothes around your body should remind you of the shroud that will wrap around you in due course. Going between Safa and Marwa should remind you of which of the two sides of the Scales you should make heavier. The gathering on Arafat should remind you of the Resurrection, and this is the summary of what he said. You can look up the full text in his book. The matter is true as he says may Allah have mercy on him and reward him on behalf of all Muslims with the best reward.

Once the pilgrim arrives at Allah’s sanctuary, His sacred Secure Town, the Noble Mecca, may Allah increase it in nobility, his heart should be full of glorification and majestic of Allah. He should be submissive and humble as he possibly can, full of reverence, awe, and powerlessness before Allah the Exalted. Let these attributes be his inner and outer garments wherever he goes in these noble places and sites.

Circumambulates [*tawaf*]

He should circumambulates [*tawaf*] the House [*Kaabah*] and pray before it assiduously. It has been transmitted that, he who does the round

of this House seven times, it will be for him the equivalent of freeing a slave. And he who *tawaf* the House never lifts his foot, nor puts it down, without a bad deed being erased, a good one recorded, or his rank being raised by a degree. The reference here is to the reward for freeing a slave purely for the sake of Allah the Exalted. And, Every day a hundred and twenty mercies alight on the House, sixty for those who are *tawaf* around it, forty for those praying before it, and twenty for those looking at it. Let him recite the Quran in abundance during his *tawaf*, and also invocations and prayers, especially those specifically related to *tawaf*. Let him touch the blessed Black Stone [*Hajar Aswad*] with great frequency, for it is the right hand of Allah on earth with which He shakes the hands of His servants. The same applies to [*nawafil*] prayer in the Hijr, for it had been part of the House, but was left out by the Quraysh when they ran short of licit funds as they were rebuilding it in the days of Ignorance [*Jahiliyah*].

The Excellence of Zamzam Water

One should drink plenty of Zamzam water, for it is the best water on the face of the earth, as he said, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, and he also said, **مَاءٌ زَمَزَمَ لِمَا شَرِبَ لَهُ، وَإِنَّمَا طَعَامٌ طُعِمَ وَشِفَاءٌ سُقِمَ**. "The Zamzam water is for what (intention) it is drunk. It is food to nourish and a cure for illness.

Many a great man has drunk of it, having formed noble intentions, and was granted them as a favour from Allah through the blessings of the Messenger of Allah's may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him.

Gathering at Arafat

When he is gathering [*wuquf*] at Arafat, let the pilgrim ask forgiveness and make invocation [*dua*] in great abundance. Let him implore Allah and weep, and beseech Him with sincerity eagerness, concentration, and repentance. Let him ask for himself, his two parents, his loved ones, then all Muslims, that everything that concerns them, whether of this world or the next, be rendered good. He will be asking one who is Generous and Liberal, in whose hand is all good, who possesses the treasures of the heavens and the earth.

This gathering is the greatest and most comprehensive of all Islamic gatherings. Innumerable angels and men of Allah attend it. It has been transmitted that Allah Exalted is He, boasts of the people of the gathering before the denizens of heaven, then asks His angels to bear witness that He had accepted those of them that had done good, and given those who had done evil to those who had done good. It has also been transmitted that the greatest of sinners is he who stands on Arafat then goes away thinking that he had not been forgiven. Another hadith says that Iblis may Allah curse him is never seen more humiliated, vanquished or enraged than on the day of Arafa, and this is because he witnesses the mercy that is descending and Allah's forgiveness for the sinners standing on Arafat.

Commerce During Hajj

The pilgrim's only intention should be to come to the House of Allah for pilgrimage and for honouring what He made sacred. If his intention is not so, then let him beware to the extreme from taking along worldly things that may distract him from performing the rites and honouring them as he should and is expected to, and this occurs with many who are forgetful of Allah and enamoured with the world. They are occupied with commercial transactions that they fail to honour the sacred things or perform the rites properly. With some of them, it may even reach the point where their main intention becomes commerce, while the pilgrimage becomes subsidiary and this is a major error and is greatly reprehensible. As for commerce as such during the pilgrimage, there is no harm and no sin in it so long as it is not distracting or damaging to the correct performance of the pilgrimage. Allah has permitted it and revealed concerning it.

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ، فَإِذَا أَقَضْتُمْ مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِندَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ، وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الضَّالِّينَ.

“It is no fault in you if you seek of the bounty of your Lord during Hajj. Then when you descend upon Mount Arafat, celebrate the praises of

Allah at the Sacred Monument, and celebrate His praises as He has directed you, even though, before this, you went astray.”¹

However, it is preferable if one’s sole intention is to perform the pilgrimage. In this case, it will not harm to carry along some merchandise, provided it is not likely to distract from the rites, nor disperse the heart’s concentration. It is what distracts from the rites and disperses the heart’s concentration that is reprehensible. So, beware of it pilgrim if you desire your pilgrimage to be complete and accepted and your effort rewarded. It is also reprehensible to go on pilgrimage, as certain common people do, intending to discharge one’s duty to perform the obligatory pilgrimage, to be eligible to be hired by others to perform their pilgrimages on their behalf. The desire of such a man is but the fee he will receive. His is an ugly passion for this world. It is possible that Allah the Exalted does not accept the obligatory pilgrimage of he whose mind harbours such things. So, let him fear Allah and beware of such intentions that are devoid of all goodness. We have mentioned this because some common people lacking wisdom have been observed doing it. They should be warned against it, and this knowledge should be disseminated.

There is nothing wrong or blameworthy in hiring someone to perform the pilgrimage on one’s behalf. The person hired should intend to visit the House, glorify the Divine Sanctities of Allah and discharge his Muslim brother’s obligation to perform the pilgrimage, out of compassion for him. In this manner will this person receive a great reward by the grace of Allah the Exalted. As for the hired person who desires nothing but his fees, he is not safe from peril. Imam al-Ghazali may Allah have mercy on him said, “He who is hired to perform the pilgrimage should make going to the House his primary intention and the fee secondary to it, not reverse the priority, giving the fee primary and making the pilgrimage secondary.”

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 198.

Perform *Hajj* as it is Fully Prescribed

A pilgrim should perform the Hajj most effectively as concerns both its obligatory [*fardu*] and supererogatory [*sunnah*] aspects. He should conform to all the *sunnah* and courtesies, according to how the *Hajj* of the Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him was described. Knowledge of all this is found in the books of rites authored by the scholars, may Allah's mercy be upon them. Among the best is that by Imam Nawawi may Allah have mercy on him. No pilgrim should go without one of these references so that he may know what he is doing and what his Lord wishes him to do. He should visit all the places of special importance and the locations that are especially honoured. These are very well known.

Visit the Messenger

He should visit [*ziarah*] the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him with utmost determination and be extremely careful not to neglect this, if able to do it, especially following his obligatory pilgrimage. It has been transmitted that he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ حَجَّ وَلَمْ يَزُرْنِي فَقَدْ جَفَانِي. وَمَنْ زَارَنِي مَيِّتًا فَكَأَنَّمَا زَارَنِي حَيًّا.

“He who performs the pilgrimage but does not visit me will have treated me coldly. And, He who visits me after my death will be as if he has visited me in my lifetime.”

A believer should not neglect to visit his Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him unless he has a very good excuse, for his rights upon his community, are immense. Were someone to come from the place on earth that is farthest from his honourable grave walking on his face or eyesight to visit him, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, he would still have not fulfilled what he owes his Prophet.

May Allah reward Muhammad on our behalf and that of all Muslims with the best reward Allah has ever granted a Prophet on behalf

of his community. For surely, Muhammad has conveyed the message, clarified the evidence, counselled the community, removed the gloom, and left us on a pure white path, a clear well-travelled road of truth, its night as clear as its day.

صَلَّى اللَّهُ وَبَارَكَ وَسَلَّم عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ أَفْضَلَ مَا صَلَّى وَبَارَكَ وَسَلَّم
عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ وَأَدْوَمِهِ، عَدَدَ مَا عِلِمَ وَزِنَةَ مَا عِلِمَ وَمِلَّةَ مَا
عِلِمَ، كُلَّمَا ذَكَرَهُ الذَّاكِرُونَ، وَسَهَا وَغَفَلَ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِ الْغَافِلُونَ.

May Allah's salutations of blessings and peace upon him and his family which are more bountiful and more permanent than the salutations of blessings and peace that He granted to any of His creation, by the number which is known, the value of which is known, and magnitude of what is known every time those who remember remembers and every time those who neglect forget or are neglectful.

Chapter Seven

Reciting the Quran

You should know O brother, may Allah make us and you of those who recite His August Book as it should be, who believe in it, memorize and are preserved by it, uphold and summon to it such as reciting the formidable Quran is one of the best acts of worship, greatest things to offer to Allah, and highest devotions. In it is an immense wage, a generous reward. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ. لِيُؤْفِقَهُمُ أَجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ.

“Those who recite the Book of Allah, establish Prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them (in Charity), whether secretly and in public, hope for an investment that will never fail: For He will give them their reward in full and increase more out of His Bounty: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service).”¹

The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,
أَفْضَلُ عِبَادَةٍ أُمِّتِي تِلَاوَةُ الْقُرْآنِ.

“The best of my community’s acts of worship is to recite the Quran.”

And, he may salutations and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah 35 Fathir Verses 29-30.

مَنْ قَرَأَ حَرْفًا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ كُتِبَتْ لَهُ حَسَنَةٌ وَالْحَسَنَةُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا. لَا أَقُولُ أَلَمْ حَرْفٌ وَاحِدٌ، بَلْ أَلِفٌ حَرْفٌ، وَلَاَمٌ حَرْفٌ، وَمِيمٌ حَرْفٌ.

“He who recites a letter from the Book of Allah, a good deed is recorded to his credit, and a good deed is rewarded with ten-time equivalent. I do not say that *Alif Lam Mim* is one letter, but *Alif* is one letter, *Lam* is one letter, and *Mim* is one letter.

And, he may salutations and peace be upon him, said,

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: مَنْ شَعَلَهُ ذِكْرِي وَتِلَاوَةُ كِتَابِي عَنْ مَسْأَلَتِي أُعْطِيَتْهُ أَفْضَلُ مَا أُعْطِيَ السَّائِلِينَ. وَفَضْلُ كَلَامِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَلَامِ كَفَضْلِ اللَّهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ.

“Allah the Exalted says, “Whoever is too occupied with the remembrance of Me and the reciting My Book to petition Me, I shall grant him better than what I grant those who ask.” And the superiority of the speech of Allah the Exalted over other speech is as the superiority of Allah over His creation.”

And, he may salutations and peace be upon him, said,

اقْرَأُوا الْقُرْآنَ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شَفِيعًا لِأَصْحَابِهِ.

“Recite the Qur'an, indeed, on Resurrection Day it shall intercede those who do so.”

Ali, may Allah honour his countenance, said, “He who recites the Quran as he stands in prayer shall receive for each letter the reward for a hundred good deeds. He who recites it as he prays sitting down shall receive for each letter fifty good deeds. He who recites it outside of prayer, but being ritually pure, shall receive for each letter twenty-five good deeds. And he who recites it without ritual purification shall receive for each letter ten good deeds.”

Manner During Recitation

You should know that recitation has both outward [*dhahir*] and inward [*batin*] courtesies to be observed. A servant is not truly a reciter whose recitation is pure, nor does he receive consideration from Allah,

until he conforms to these good manners. The recitation of those who neglect or do not master them remains incomplete. However, they will not be deprived of reward altogether but will be treated according to their performance.

One of the most important and mandatory good manners is for the recitation to be for no other purpose than for Allah the Exalted, seeking His noble countenance, intending to draw nearer to Him and win His reward. Showing off, affectation, or seeking to look good in the sight of created beings should be avoided, and so also to obtain immediate and ephemeral profits. One's inner self and heart should be full of the immensity of the Speaker, August and High is He, submissive to His majesty, of humble heart and bodily members, so full of reverence and humility as to be as if standing before Allah the Exalted, reciting His Book in which are His commands and prohibitions. Rightfully, the reciter should be so, or even more perfect than that, if he has come to know the Quran and Allah, the Speaker. How can he not be so when Allah, Exalted is He, says,

لَوْ أَنزَلْنَاهُ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْنَاهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا
لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ.

“Had We sent down this Quran on a mountain, verily, you would have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah. Such are the similitudes which We propound to men, that they may reflect.”¹

If this is what would happen to a mountain, solid and hard as they are, should the Quran be sent down upon it, how much more should it be with a weak human being created from water and clay, were it not for the distraction, hardness of hearts and their lack of knowledge of Allah's immensity, His inaccessible rank and majesty!!

Allah, Exalted is He, in describing those of His servants who are awed by the recitation of the Quran, says,

¹ Surah 59 AL Hashr Verse 21.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ إِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا. وَيَقُولُونَ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُولًا. وَيَخِرُّونَ لِلْأَذْقَانِ يَبْكُونَ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ خُشُوعًا.

“Verily, those who were given knowledge before this, when it is recited to them, fall on their chin in prostration. And they say: “Glory to our Lord! Truly has the promise of our Lord been fulfilled! And they fall upon their chins weeping, and it increases them in humility.”¹

And He, Exalted is He, says,

اللَّهُ نَزَلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَابِي تَقْشَعُرُ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ.

“Allah has revealed the most beautiful Message in the form of a Book, consistent with itself, yet repeating its teaching in various aspects: It makes the skins shiver of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts do soften to the remembrance of Allah.”²

Magnification, awe, humility, and submissiveness when reciting the Quran are attributes of sincere believers, aware of the majesty of the Lord of the Worlds.

Distraction, hardness, inattention and frivolity when reciting the Quran are the attributes of those who have turned away and are mixing good with bad deeds, whose faith is weak and certainty scarce, whose hearts are devoid of the realities of the knowledge of Allah and His speech.

﴿نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ،﴾

﴿وَمِنْ جَمِيعِ أَنْوَاعِ الْبَلَاءِ وَالْمَهَالِكِ﴾

We ask Allah for safety from all this, for you and us,
And from all kinds of hardships and perils.

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 107-109.

² Surah Az-Zumar Verse 23.

Also, among the most important and incumbent good manners is to be present of heart when reciting, to reflect on the meanings and strive to understand. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ.

“(Here is) a Book which We have sent down unto you, full of blessings, that they may meditate on its Signs, and that men of understanding may receive admonition.”¹

In reprimanding certain clans that showed denial and rebuke the Quran, He, Exalted is He, says, أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا.

“Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up by them?”²

Ali, may Allah be pleased with him said, “There is no good in a recitation without reflection in it.” He has spoken the truth, may Allah be pleased with him, for the Quran was sent do to reflected upon, for it is by reflection that the intended meaning is understood, one is able to acquire the knowledge in it, then put it into practice, which is the purpose of sending it down and conveying it to the people through the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings be upon him, his family and companions and let there be peace in it.

Therefore, when you recite, strive to reflect and understand, for a little that you recite with reflection and understanding is better than much that is recited without understanding.

One of our virtuous ancestors, may Allah’s mercy be upon them, said, “To recite *az Zalzala* and *al-Qaaria* with reflection and understanding is more satisfying to me than to read the whole Quran.”

Another was asked about two persons, one of whom recited only Surah 2 al-Baqara, while the other recited Surah 2 al-Baqara and Surah 3 Ala Imran, yet they started and finished together, which of the two was better? He answered, “The one who reads only al-Baqara is better.”

¹ Surah 38 Saad Verse 29.

² Surah 42 Muhammad Verse 24.

In my opinion: This is because, although the other had recited about twice as much, the first had recited with reflection and deliberation, as shown by his taking the same time as he who had recited more.

It should now have become clear to you that the goal is reflection and understanding, for these are what count when reciting the Quran. So do this, may Allah have mercy on you.

Al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “Those who were before you perceived this Quran as messages from their Lord to them, so they reflected on these by night, then put them into practice by day.”

The more a person knows Allah, the more he will reflect on the Quran and strive to understand its contents, and this is why for those firmly established scholars and rightly guided imams who possess the gnosis of Allah, the possibilities of reflecting on the Quran and understanding it becomes vast. Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, his family and companions, led us in prayer at night, reciting only His, Exalted is He, words,

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ.

“If You do punish them, they are but Your servants: If You do forgive them, You are the Exalted in Power, the Wise.”¹

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, used to repeat the same verse during his night vigils and reflect upon it till he became so overcome with fear and awe that he fell, sometimes becoming so ill that people visited him for his illness.

Tamim al-Daari once kept repeating the following verse in his night prayer, till dawn

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ.

¹ Surah 5 Al Maida Verse 118.

“What! Do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds, equal in their life and their death? How ill is the judgment that they make!”¹

And Said ibn Jubayr, may Allah have mercy on him, repeated the following words a whole night,

“And O you in sin! Get you apart this Day!”² وَأَمْتَارُوا الْيَوْمَ أَئِنَّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ.

Such stories about our virtuous predecessors abound in the record. Fear and weeping overcame them when reciting the Quran, so well did they know Allah, reflect on His Book, and understand it. Many of them are known to have lost consciousness on occasions when they recited the Quran or heard it being recited. Some have even died, and this is well known from their anecdotal stories and biographies. May Allah have mercy on them and cause us to benefit from them.

Thus, when you recite the Quran, reflect, understand, and meditate. Halt at each verse containing one of the commands of Allah or His prohibitions, a promise or a threat, then consider, if you find yourself obeying His orders, refraining from what He prohibited, believing with certainty in these promises and threats, thank Allah, and know that it is through His assistance and His providentially granted success that you have achieved this. On the other hand, should you find yourself neither obeying His orders, nor refraining from His prohibitions, your certainty in His promises and threats weak, then ask your Lord for forgiveness, repent to Him from your neglectful attitude, and resolve to obey His commands and refrain from His prohibitions, and impose upon your heart complete certainty in His promises and threats.

Similarly, when you recite the verses relating to the oneness of Allah and His holiness, Greatness and Majestic is He, and the verses mentioning His lofty attributes and most beautiful names, then halt and reflect on the meanings they contain concerning His majesty and His sublime glory and perfection. Then your heart will be full of His oneness and holiness, and with magnification and reverence.

¹ Surah 45 Al Jaathiya Verse 21.

² Surah 36 Ya Sin Verse 59.

When you recite the verses mentioning the attributes of believers and virtuous servants of Allah the Exalted, describing their praiseworthy character, reflect on these and study them, then impose it upon yourself to acquire these attributes.

But when you recite the verses mentioning the foes, be they disbelievers or hypocrites, their ugly attributes and character, reflect on them and search within yourself to see if any of them apply to you, in which case you should rid yourself of them and repent to Allah lest some of the wrath and punishment that befell them should befall you.

These examples should guide you to reflect upon the verses of Allah, each verse according to its meaning and context, for the verses of the Quran are numerous, of many kinds and categories, containing vast, abundant sciences that know of no limit or end. He, Exalted is he, say, “We have neglected nothing in the Book.”¹ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ.

And He, Exalted is he, say, وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ. “And We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things.”²

And the hadith says, “Every verse has an outward and an inward, a limit and a place of ascent.”

Recite with Deliberation

To assist you in reflecting upon and understanding the meanings of the Quran, recite correctly and with deliberation, without haste, without allowing it to become jabber, for it has been transmitted that this is not permissible. Allah, Exalted is He, said to His Messenger, may blessings and peace be upon him,

“And recite the Qur'an in measured rhythmic tones.”³ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا.

When Umm Salama and other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, described the recitation of the Messenger of Allah,

¹ Surah 6 Al Anaam Verse 38.

² Surah 16 An Nahl Verse 89.

³ Surah 73 Al Muzzammil Verse 4.

may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, they said it had been deliberate, distinct, letter by letter. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said, "The reciter of the Quran shall be told, "Recite and climb, and chant it as you used to do in the world, your degree shall be with the last verse you recite."

A certain scholar, may Allah have mercy on them, said, "The number of degrees in the Garden is equal to that of the verses of the Quran. Therefore, he who recites the complete Quran shall be in the highest degree."

In my opinion: This applies to the reciter whose recitation is excellent and who puts into practice what he recites, not the distracted entangled reciter, and this is understood from the authentic hadiths describing the punishment of whoever recites the Quran as it was revealed but puts into practice none of it. The verses of the Quran number over six thousand; therefore, the degrees of the Garden according to the opinion of the quoted scholar are the same. And Allah knows best.

Recite Melodiously

It is recommended to make one's voice melodious when reciting the Quran, and this helps the heart being attentive, awed and sad and stimulates one to listen carefully. He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“Refine the Quran recitation with your voices.” حَسِّنُوا الْقُرْآنَ بِأَصْوَاتِكُمْ.

He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ لَمْ يَتَغَنَّ بِالْقُرْآنِ فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا.

“Whoever does not chant the Quran melodiously is not from among us.”

And he said in praise of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, may Allah be pleased with him, having heard him recite the Quran melodious, "He has been given a flute, like the flutes of David." However, this should be done in a manner that is consonant with the reverence and respect due to the Quran. It should never resemble singing, or the rhythmic chanting of poetry, as is done by certain fools.

Prepare Yourself Physically Before Reciting

It is incumbent that when you want to recite the Quran, you should be in the most complete state as concerns purity, facing the Qibla, motionlessness of bodily members, avoiding turning your head around, concentration, avoiding looking here and there, cleanliness of body, clothes, and place, and fragrance of smell. This is the best and most complete manner of doing it. Should one recite without ritual purity, not facing the Qibla, or while standing, walking, or lying down, it is still permissible, and there is still merit and reward in it, but less than that for he who fulfils all the conditions of proper courtesy.

Status of those who Recite the Quran

You should know, may Allah have mercy on you, that the reciter of the Quran and he who has learned it by heart have a rank in the sight of Allah. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ وَهُوَ بِهِ مَاهِرٌ مَعَ السَّفَرَةِ الْكِرَامِ الْبَرَّةِ. وَالَّذِي يَقْرُؤُهُ وَيَتَعَتُّعُ فِيهِ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ شَاقٌّ لَهُ أَجْرَانِ.

“He who recites the Quran skilfully is with the Angels Scribes that are noble and loyal. As for he who recites and absorbs its meaning, shudders and stutters his shall be two rewards.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَهْلُ الْقُرْآنِ هُمْ أَهْلُ اللَّهِ وَخَاصَّتُهُ.

“The people of the Quran are Allah’s people and His elect.”

Many other merits have been detailed in numerous well-known hadiths.

Know the Rights of the Quran

Nevertheless, he who recites the Quran should know its rights upon him, the respect and reverence due to it, that it is incumbent upon him to learn what it contains, then put it into practice, be guided by what it enjoins in the way of excellent attributes, noble character, and good works. Although this is required of all Muslims, it is more incumbent

upon he who recites the Quran, for he is more worthy of it, because of his merit and the merit of that which he knows of the Book of Allah, its evidence and proofs.

Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “O reciters! Lift your heads, and your path has become clear, so compete for goodness.”

Abdullah ibn Masud, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “The man of Quran should be recognizable by his behaviour at night, while people sleep; His fasting by day, while people eat; His sadness, while people are happy; His weeping, while people laugh; His silence, while people prattle; And his humility, while people boast.”

In my opinion, the meaning of ibn Masud’s words is that the men of Quran should distinguish themselves from common people by their zeal in obeying Allah, their hastening to acts of goodness, the thoroughness with which they guard themselves against distraction and avoid frivolity, and their complete fear and awe of Allah the Exalted. Ibn Masud, may Allah be pleased with him, also said, “The Quran was sent down to be put into practice, but you have turned to study it into a job.”

The Reciter Who Does Not Benefit

As for the distracted reciter whose works are mixed, who does not practice what is in the Quran, does not obey its injunctions, is not held back by its rebukes, and does not stop at its limits, many hadiths have been transmitted as to how blameworthy he is, how severely he will be treated, and what he is threatened with. May Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said, **إِقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ مَا نَهَاكَ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْهَاكَ فَلَسْتَ تَقْرُؤُهُ.**

“Recite the Quran so long as it restrains you from evil. If it is not restraining you, you are not reciting it.”

And, He, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

مَنْ جَعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمَامَهُ قَادَهُ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَنْ حَعَلَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ سَاقَهُ إِلَى النَّارِ.

“He who places the Quran before him, it will lead him to the Garden, but who places it behind him, it will drive him to the Fire.”

The above is part of a long hadith.

And, He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him,
النَّارُ إِلَى فَسَقَةِ الْقُرْآنِ أَسْرَعُ مِنْهَا إِلَى عَبْدَةِ الْاَوْثَانِ.

“The Fire will reach corrupt reciters faster than it reaches the idolaters.”

And, He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him,
إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ غَرِيبٌ فِي جَوْفِ الظَّالِمِ. وَأَنَّهُ كَمِ مِنْ قَارِيٍّ يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ وَالْقُرْآنُ يَلْعَنُهُ.

“Indeed, the Quran remains a stranger inside the unjust. How many a reciter recites the Quran while it is cursing him?”

Meaning: because he is disobeying it and acting against its injunctions. A report reached us that some of those who know the Quran by heart will be dragged to the Fire ahead of the idol worshippers. They will ask, “Why are we to be punished before the idol worshippers?” The Angels will answer, “Those who know are not the same as those who do not know.”

It has also been said that when the reciter of the Quran commits sins, the Quran calls him from inside him, “Where are my rebukes? Where are my threats? Where are my counsels?” and so on.

Maimun ibn Mahran, may Allah, the Exalted have mercy on him, said, “Some of them recite, yet the Quran curse themselves.” They asked him “How is that so?” (Quoting the verses) he replied, “They recite, yet, فَجَعَلَ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ. ”¹ “We invoke the curse of Allah on liars!” even as they are lying, he continues; and even as they are unjust”.

“May the curse of Allah be upon the unjust.”² أَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ.

A hadith narration states,

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقَ الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ مَثْلُهُ مَثَلُ الرَّيْحَانَةِ رَحِيحُهَا طَيِّبٌ وَطَعْمُهَا مُرٌّ.

“The hypocrite who recites the Quran is like the myrtle plant flower, its smell is good, but its taste is bitter.”

And in the same hadith,

أَنَّ أَقْوَامًا يَقْرَأُونَ الْقُرْآنَ كَمَا أَنْزَلَ، وَأَنَّهُ لَا يُجَاوِزُ تَرَاقِيهِمْ، يَمُرُّونَ مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ كَمَا يَمُرُّ السَّهْمُ مِنَ الرَّمِيَّةِ.

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 61.

² Surah 11 Hud Verse 18.

“Some people recite the Quran, but it goes not beyond their collarbone. They exit from Islam even as the arrow passes through its target.”

نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى اللَّطْفَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ، وَالتَّوْفِيقَ لِلتَّمَسُّكِ بِكِتَابِهِ، وَالْعِلْمَ بِهِ، وَالْفَهْمَ فِيهِ، وَالْعَمَلَ بِمَا أُرْشَدَ إِلَيْهِ، مَعَ وَحُسْنِ الْعَافِيَةِ فِي الْأُمُورِ كُلِّهَا لَنَا وَلِأَحِبَّائِنَا وَلِلْمُسْلِمِينَ.

We ask, Allah, the Exalted, for ease, gentleness and security, for success in holding fast to His Book, learn from it, understand its content, and putting its guidance into practice, together with good endings and good consequences to all our affairs, for us, our loved ones and all Muslims.

Learn and Teach the Quran.

It is one of the greatest devotions and most tremendous merits to learn the noble Quran and teach it. It is one of the most mandatory obligations [*fardu kifaya*].

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ.

“The best among you are those who learn the Quran and teach it.”

And when Sufyan al-Thawri may Allah’s mercy be upon him asked, “Is a man who learns the Quran more pleasing to you or one who fights in the way of Allah?” He answered, “He who learns the Quran.”

It is incumbent upon the person who has learned the Quran by heart must recite it frequently by day and by night, with reflection, understanding, and extreme courtesy and respect. Let him beware to the utmost from neglecting to recite it and abandoning to look after it, for this might lead to forgetting it, which is one of the greatest sins. The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

عُرِضَتْ عَلَيَّ ذُنُوبُ أُمَّتِي فَلَمْ أَرْ ذَنْبًا أَكْبَرَ مِنْ سُورَةٍ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ أَوْ آيَةٍ أُوتِيَهَا رَجُلٌ ثُمَّ نَسِيَهَا.

“The sins of my *ummah* were shown to me. I saw none greater than that of a man who was given a surah or verse of the Quran, then forgot it.”

And in another hadith,

إِنَّ الَّذِي يَنْسَى الْقُرْآنَ بَعْدَ حِفْظِهِ يَلْقَى اللَّهَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُوَ أَجْدَمٌ.

“He who forgets the Quran, having learned it by heart, will come to meet Allah on Resurrection Day as a leper.”

The Prophet may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, for as enjoined upon he who has learned the Quran to preserve it, for as he said, it is swifter to escape from the breast of men than hobbled camels are to escape from their tethers.

Our virtuous predecessors, may Allah have mercy on them, were careful with the Quran, they set a routine to recite, some completing its recitation every month, some of them every ten nights, others every eight, seven or three nights. Some completed a full recitation every day and night. Others two or four with the maximum was eight complete recitations in a day and night. Imam al-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “This is the maximum that has come to our knowledge. However, certain scholars have stated that to make it a habit to complete it in less than three days was to be discouraged, since he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, لَا يَفْقَهُ مَنْ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ فِي أَقَلِّ مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ.

“He will not understand who recites the Quran in less than three.”

Make the Quran Recitation as Part of the Night Vigil

It is incumbent for the man of Quran should have a daily routine remembrance [*wird*] of recitation during his night prayers, completing the Quran in a month, forty days, more or less, according to determination and circumstances. He should never abandon this, nor feel so lazy as to neglect it. The hadith narration stated,

أَنَّ الْقُرْآنَ وَالصَّوْمَ يُشَفِّعَانِ الْعَبْدَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ. فَيَقُولُ الْقُرْآنُ: مَنَعْتُهُ النَّوْمَ بِاللَّيْلِ فَشَفِّعْنِي فِيهِ. وَيَقُولُ الصَّوْمُ: مَنَعْتُهُ مِنَ الْأَكْلِ بِالنَّهَارِ فَشَفِّعْنِي فِيهِ فَيُشَفِّعَانِ.

“Indeed, the Quran and the Fast intercede for the servant to Allah. The Quran will say, “I prevented him from sleeping at night, so permit me to intercede for him.” The Fast will say, “I prevented him from eating by day, so permit me to intercede for him.” They intercede as permitted.”

Allah, Exalted is He says,

لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ.
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ
وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ.

“The People of the Book not alike, a portion upheld the straight path they rehearse the Signs of Allah all night long and prostrate themselves. They believe in Allah and the Last Day; they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; and they hasten to do good deeds: They are in the ranks of the righteous.”¹

Thus the reciter of the Quran must pray at night, reciting what he can as He, Exalted is He, says,

“Recite what you can of it.”² فَافْرُؤْ مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ.

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ قَامَ بَعَشْرَ آيَاتٍ لَمْ يُكْتَبْ مِنَ الْعَافِيْنَ، وَمَنْ قَامَ بِمِائَةِ آيَةٍ كُتِبَ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ، وَمَنْ
قَامَ بِأَلْفِ آيَةٍ كُتِبَ مِنَ الْمُقْنَطَرِينَ.

“He who keeps vigil with ten verses shall not be recorded among the neglectful. He who keeps vigil with a hundred verses shall be recorded as the pious humble. And he who keeps vigil with a thousand verses shall be recorded among those who will receive many ‘quintal’.

Al-Ameri, may Allah have mercy on him, said in his Bahjah, “The reciter of the Quran should complete it twice a month, once at night during his vigils, and once during the day.” He adds, “And this is easy and to persevere in it is also easy.” He has spoken the truth, may Allah have mercy on him, He who will succeed is he to whom Allah grants success.

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verses 113-114.

² Surah 73 Al- Muzzammil Verse 20.

Excellence Time to Complete Reciting the Quran [*Khatam*]

Those who wish to complete the recitation of the Quran should do so at the beginning of the night or the day, to give time to the angels to pray for him. There is a tradition to the effect that he who concludes the Quran by night, the angels will pray for him until morning or by day, they will pray for him until evening. There are every goodness and happiness in the prayers of the angels for the servant, which consist of asking Allah to forgive him and to grant him all good things. He must make invocation [*dua*] in abundance at the time of completion, for it is a noble and blessed time when prayers are accepted, and mercy descends.

Imam al-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy on him, says, “He should devote much of his prayers at the time of completion to the wellbeing of all Muslims in every possible way.” Then he quotes some of the prayers to be recited at the time of completing the Quran, and this is in his book *Al-Tibyan*, which is a most valuable and important book in which he has brought together an ample amount of the good manners necessary for both those who know the Quran by heart and those who read it, such as they cannot do without.

Recite by Sections [*Hizb*]

It is incumbent to hold on to firmly and persevered in, especially in these blessed times, the blessed *Hizb* that people have made a habit of reciting every day in many lands, and usually held in mosques between *Maghrib* and *'Isha* and after the *fajr* prayer. It is known as the weekly *Hizb*. It begins on Thursday evening (Friday night in Arabic) and completes on Thursday morning.

It has been transmitted that Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, began reciting the Quran on Thursday evening (Friday night in Arabic) and completed it on Wednesday evening (Thursday night in Arabic). The *Hizb* we have mentioned conforms to this as regards its beginning and end and is not far from what has been said concerning Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and others of our predecessors, as for when and how much to recite.

The jurist Abu Abdallah ibn Abbad, may Allah have mercy on him, who wrote a commentary on the ‘Hikam’, mentioned this weekly *Hizb* in one of his treatises, saying, “It is an excellent innovation [*Bidaa Hasanah*] onto which one must hold on firmly, especially in these times when care for the rites of religion has weakened.” Things are as he said, may Allah have mercy on him.

However, he who perseveres in this blessed *Hizb* should not forget two of its courtesies, as many have done. The first is not to confine his recitation of the Quran to the *Hizb*, for it is mostly recited in a group, the number of which may be large so that the share of each of its individuals is small. The second is not to doze off while others are reading and only become aware of what is going on when they awaken him to take his turn. Others may talk to their neighbours and continue their conversation until their turn comes, and this is not how it should be. On the contrary, this is blameworthy and repulsive, especially in a mosque, where speech other than the remembrance of Allah and recitation of His Book is extremely reprehensible. It has been transmitted that, talking in a mosque consumes good deeds, just as fire burns dry wood.

We have drawn attention to these two courtesies because we have seen many who read the *Hizb* yet seem unaware of them. A person present when someone is reciting the Book of Allah while he dozes off or engages in small talk is in a problematic state and perilous situation. He is as if turning away from the Book of Allah the Exalted, inattentive to it. So, let him beware who fears Allah and respects His sacred things.

Listen to the Quran and its Manners

It is incumbent for those who do not memorise the Book of Allah the Exalted, by heart, let him listen to it frequently and be attentive.

Allah, Exalted is He, say, وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ. “When the Quran is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace: that you may receive Mercy.”¹

¹ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 204.

The Prophet may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 مَنِ اسْتَمَعَ إِلَى آيَةٍ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ كُتِبَتْ لَهُ حَسَنَةٌ مُضَاعَفَةٌ. وَمَنْ قَرَأَهَا كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا
 يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Those who listen to a verse of the Book of Allah, a multiplied good deed is recorded. And for those who recite it, it will be light on Resurrection Day.”

The injunction to listen is not confined to those who do not know the Quran by heart, but to everyone. Once, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said to ibn Masud, “Recite to me.” Ibn Masud asked, “How can I recite to you when it is to you that it was sent down?” He may blessings and peace be upon him said, “I desire to hear it from another”. So, ibn Masud recited to him, starting from the beginning of Surah anNisaa as the hadith narrated. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, listened to ibn Masud's recitation and that of Salim, Abu Hudhayfa's servant, then said, الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي أُمَّتِي مِثْلَهُ.

“Praised to Allah for raising in my community one like him.”

He also listened to the recitation of ibn Masud accompanied by Abu Bakr and Umar, then said,

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَفْرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ رَطْبًا كَمَا أُنْزِلَ، فَلْيَفْرَأْ عَلَى قِرَاءَةِ ابْنِ أُمِّ عَبْدِ.

“Whoever wishes to recite the Quran as fresh as when it was sent down, let him recite it emulating the recitation of ibn Umm 'Abd. Ibn Umm 'Abd being ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Virtues of Certain Surah and Verses

It is important to persevere in reciting those Surah and verses which have specific virtues and rewards for reciting them. The encouragement to do so at specific times are mentioned in hadith.

One of which is the recitation of *Surah 18 al-Kahf* on Friday and the night before. Whereby the hadith states,

إِنَّ مَنْ قَرَأَهَا غُفِرَ لَهُ إِلَى الْجُمُعَةِ الْآخَرَى، وَسَطَعَ لَهُ نُورٌ مِنْ قَدَمِهِ إِلَى عَنَانِ السَّمَاءِ.

“Indeed those who recite it thus is forgiven till the next Friday, and a light shines for him, extending from beneath his feet to the sky,

or in another version, أَضَاءَ لَهُ مِنَ النُّورِ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ.

“the light shines for him between him and the Ancient House.”

It has also been transmitted that

أَنَّ مَنْ حَفِظَ عَشْرَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ الْكَهْفِ ثُمَّ حَرَجَ الدَّجَالَ عُصِمَ مِنْ فِتْنَتِهِ.

“Those who memorised the first ten verses of *Surah 18 al-Kahf* shall be protected from the Impostor [*dajjal*] whenever he appears.”

For *Surah 2 al-Baqara*, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, اِقْرُؤُوا سُورَةَ الْبَقَرَةِ، فَإِنَّ أَحْذَهَا بَرَكَةٌ وَتَرْكُهَا حَسْرَةٌ وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُهَا الْبَاطِلُ.

“Recite *Surah 2 al-Baqara*, for to do so is a benediction, to neglect it brings remorse, and evil people are incapable of it.”

And its narrated, أَنَّ الْبَيْتَ الَّذِي تُقْرَأُ فِيهِ سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ لَا يَقْرُبُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ ثَلَاثًا.

“The house in which *Surah 2 al-Baqara* is recited is not approached by a devil for three days.”

Another is to recite the blessed *Surah 36 Ya-Sin*. He may blessings and peace be upon him said,

يَسَ قَلْبُ الْقُرْآنِ، لَا يَقْرُؤُهَا رَجُلٌ يُرِيدُ اللَّهَ وَالْدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ إِلَّا غُفِرَ لَهُ.

“*Ya-Sin* is the heart of the Quran. No man who recite it with the intention of wanting Allah and the Hereafter, without him being forgiven.”

And it is narrated, أَنَّ مَنْ قَرَأَهَا كَانَ كَمَنْ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ عَشْرَ مَرَّاتٍ.

“He who recites it is as if he has recited the Quran ten times.”

Another is to recite *Surah 67 Tabarak (al-Mulk)* every night. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

هِيَ النَّفْعَةُ وَالْمُنْجِيَةُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ. وَوَدِدْتُ أَنَّهَا فِي قَلْبِ كُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ، وَأَنَّهَا سَفَعَتْ فِي رَجُلٍ فَعُفِّرَ لَهُ.

“It is beneficial and saves from the torment of the grave. I wish it were in the heart of every believer. It once interceded for a man, and he was forgiven.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon, was accustomed never to go to sleep at night before reciting *Alif Lam Min* (Surah 32 *Al Sajda*) and *Tabarak al-Mulk* (Surah 67 *al-Mulk*).

Another is to recite *Surah 44 al-Dukhan*, he said, may blessings and peace be upon him, said, مَنْ قَرَأَ سُورَةَ الدُّخَانِ فِي لَيْلَةٍ أَصْبَحَ مَغْفُورًا لَهُ. “He who recites *Surah al-Dukhan* at night is forgiven in the morning.”

And he said about *Surah 56 al-Waqia*, مَنْ قَرَأَهَا كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ لَمْ تُصِبْهُ فَاقَةٌ. “He who recites it every night is never afflicted with poverty.”

And he said about *Surah 99 al Zalzalat*, إِنَّمَا تَعْدِلُ نِصْفَ الْقُرْآنِ. “That it is the equivalent of half the Quran.”

And in *Surah 102 at-Takathur*, إِنَّ مَنْ قَرَأَهَا كَانَ كَمَنْ قَرَأَ أَلْفَ آيَةٍ. “Indeed, he who recites it is like reciting a thousand verses.”

And in *Surah 112 Al Ikhlās*, إِنَّمَا تَعْدِلُ ثُلُثُ الْقُرْآنِ، وَأَنْ مَنْ قَرَأَهَا عَشْرَ مَرَّاتٍ بُنِيَ لَهُ قَصْرٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ. “That it is the equivalent of one-third of the Quran, and he who recites it ten times, a castle is built for him in the Garden.”

It is reported that one should recite it ten times after each ritual prayer, in addition to mornings, evenings, and before sleep.

It is also reported that it is to be recited together with the *Mu'awwidhan*¹ three times for protection from all kinds of harm or anxieties.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said about *Al Fatiha*, إِنَّمَا أَعْظَمُ سُورَةٍ فِي الْقُرْآنِ، وَأَتَمُّ السَّبْعِ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ، وَأَتَمَّا أَنْزَلْتُ هِيَ وَآيَةُ الْكُرْسِيِّ وَحَوَاتِيمَ سُورَةِ الْبَقَرَةِ مِنْ كَنْزٍ تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ، وَأَنَّ الْفَاتِحَةَ لِمَا قُرِئَتْ لَهُ وَأَتَمَّا رُفِئَتْ حَقًّا.

¹ Surah 113 *Al Falaq* and Surah 114 *anNas*.

“Indeed, it is the greatest Surah in the Quran, it is also name “the seven paired ones and the Grand Quran”¹, that it had been revealed together with *Ayatul Kursi*² and the final two verses of *Surah 2 al Baqara* from a treasure under the Throne, that the *Fatiha* is good for whatever purpose it is recited for, and that it is a true curative invocation.”

As for *Ayatul Kursi*, it is reported that it is,

“The supreme verse in the Quran.”

سَيِّدَةُ آيِ الْقُرْآنِ

مَنْ قَرَأَهَا بَعْدَ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ مَكْتُوبَةٍ لَمْ يَكُنْ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ دُخُولِ الْجَنَّةِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَمُوتَ.

“He who recites it after each obligatory prayer, nothing stands between him and the Garden but death.”

مَنْ قَرَأَهَا عِنْدَ النَّوْمِ لَمْ يَقْرَبْهُ شَيْطَانٌ حَتَّى يُصْبِحَ.

“He who recites it before sleep the devil cannot approach until morning.”

It has also been transmitted that,

أَنْ مَنْ قَرَأَ الْآيَتَيْنِ مِنْ آخِرِ سُورَةِ الْبَقَرَةِ فِي لَيْلَةٍ كَفَتَاهُ.

“He who recites the two end verses of *Surah 2 al-Baqara* at night, they will suffice him.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

عَلِّمُوهُمَا نِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ فَإِنَّمَا صَلَاةٌ وَقُرْآنٌ وَدُعَاءٌ.

“Teach them to their women and their children, saying that they constituted prayer, Quran, and supplication (all three in one).”

And Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “I know of no one who after accepted Islam, and possessed of understanding, would sleep before reciting the last three verses of *Surah 2 al-Baqara*.”

The two verses meant by his, may blessings and peace be upon him, saying above, “he who recites them in any particular night, they shall suffice him,” are the last two of the above three verses.

¹ Surah 15 Al Hijr Verse 87.

² Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 255.

Scholars have said that the meaning of they shall suffice him, is that either they are enough to relieve his anxieties or to constitute sufficient night vigil for him.

Imam al-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy upon him, said it is acceptable that it may mean both at the same time.

This subject that of the merits of particular verses or surahs, is substantial and there is much textual evidence, well known to the learned, relating to it. The intention was to point out some of the more important subject, that those who desire goodness may attain to the reward attached to it, as well as to protection and safety from affliction.

﴿وَاللَّهُ الْمُوفِّقُ وَالْمُعِيّ﴾

Allah, it is who provides success and assistance.

﴿لَا رَبَّ غَيْرُهُ وَلَا إِلَهَ سِوَاهُ﴾

There is no lord and no divinity other than Him.

﴿وَحَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنَعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾

Allah is our sufficiency and the best of guardians.

Chapter Eight

Remembrance and Invocations

You should know O brothers, may Allah make you and us of those who remember Him in abundance, those whom neither possessions nor children distract from the remembrance of Allah, that remembering Allah the Exalted is one of the greatest injunctions, best devotions, and means most conducive to the reunion. Allah, August is the Speaker, says,

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ.

“Then do you remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith.”¹

And, the Exalted says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا. وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا.

“O you who believe! Celebrate the praises of Allah, and do this often; And glorify Him morning and evening.”²

And, the Exalted says,

وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ، وَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ.

“Remember Allah within yourself, imploringly, fearfully, without raising your voice, mornings and evenings, and be not one of the forgetful.”³

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 152.

² Surah 33 Al Ahzaab Verses 41-42.

³ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 205.

And the Exalted says,

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ، أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ.

“Those who believe, and whose hearts find tranquillity in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find tranquillity.”¹

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي وَأَنَا مَعَهُ حَيْثُ يَذْكُرُنِي، فَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي نَفْسِهِ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي نَفْسِي، وَإِنْ ذَكَرَنِي فِي مَالٍ ذَكَرْتُهُ فِي مَالٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُمْ، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ شِبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا، وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ بَاعًا وَإِنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً.

“Allah Exalted is He, say, I am as My servant thinks of Me, and I am with him whenever he remembers Me. Whenever he mentions Me within himself, I mention him within Myself, and whenever he mentions Me in a company, I mention him in a better company. Whenever he draws nearer to me an inch, I draw nearer to him by an arm’s length. Whenever he draws nearer to Me by an arm’s length, I draw nearer to him by two arm’s lengths. And whenever he comes to Me walking, I come to him running.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

أَلَا أُنبِئُكُمْ بِخَيْرِ أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَأَزْكَاها عِنْدَ مَلِيكِكُمْ، وَأَرْفَعُهَا فِي دَرَجَاتِكُمْ وَخَيْرٌ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِنْفَاقِ الذَّهَبِ وَالْوَرِقِ، وَمَنْ أَنْ تَلْقَوْا عَدُوَّكُمْ فَيَضْرِبُوا أَعْنَاقَكُمْ وَتَضْرِبُوا أَعْنَاقَهُمْ؟ قَالُوا بَلَى. قَالَ: ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى.

“Shall I inform you of which of your works is best, purest in the sight of your Sovereign, most elevating for your degrees, better for you than spending gold and silver or encountering your enemy so that you cut off their neck and they cut off yours? They said “Yes!” He said, The remembrance of Allah.”

¹ Surah 13 Ar Rad Verse 28.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا عَمِلَ ابْنُ آدَمَ عَمَلًا أَتَجَى لَهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

“There is not a deed that can save the Son of Adam from Allah’s torment other than the remembrance of Allah.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ بِالْعَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ حَطْمِ السُّيُوفِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، وَمِنْ إِعْطَاءِ الْمَالِ سَخًا.

“To remember Allah mornings and evenings is better than breaking your swords fighting in the way of Allah the Exalted and from spending money liberally (in charity).

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَثَلُ الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِي لَا يَذْكُرُهُ مَثَلُ الْحَيِّ وَالْمَيِّتِ، وَمَثَلُ الشَّجَرَةِ الْخَضِرَاءِ بَيْنَ الشَّجَرِ الْيَابِسِ، وَذَاكِرُ اللَّهِ فِي الْغَافِلِينَ كَالْمُقَاتِلِ بَيْنَ الْفَارِثِينَ.

“The likeness of he who remembers Allah and whoever does not is that of a man alive and another dead, or that of a green tree among dry ones. He who is remembering Allah amidst the forgetful is as he who stands his ground amidst those who flee (from Jihad).”

The verses of the Quran and the Hadiths enjoining the remembrance of Allah and detailing its merits are too numerous to exhaust.

The Best of Remembrance

Scholars, may Allah have mercy upon them, have said, “The best remembrance is that which involves both the heart and the tongue. The remembrance of the heart alone is better than that of the tongue alone.

In my opinion, remembrance of the heart means that it is present with either the form or the meaning of the invocation uttered by the tongue. As an example, when the person who invokes says with his tongue *la ilaha illallah*, he should be repeating it within his heart simultaneously. Remembrance of the heart can also mean that it is utter aloud by the tongue yet present in him. An example, when the tongue

utter *la ilaha illallah*, this noble utterance, which is that divinity is the exclusive prerogative of the Real, should be present in his heart. Allah knows best.

The Proof of Islam, may Allah have mercy on him, says, “Remembrance is of four degrees:

- The first is that of the tongue only.
- The second is that of the tongue and heart together, but with the exertion of effort.
- The third is for the remembrance to become the attribute of the heart so that it is effortlessly and constantly on the tongue.
- The fourth is for the Remembered to overpower the heart so that it becomes absorbed therein.

He explained that the first degree, which is remembrance with the tongue while the heart is distracted, is of little benefit and feeble effect, and this is undoubtedly so, but it is better than abandoning remembrance altogether. A certain Gnostic was once told, “We remember Allah, but achieve no presence.” He replied, “Thank Allah for adorning one of your bodily organs the tongue with the Remembrance of Him.”

It is incumbent for those who invoke Allah with his tongue should exert himself to achieve the presence of the heart, so that he may be remembered with both, even if with difficulty at the beginning. Then let him persevere in this until the heart tastes the pleasure of remembrance and the lights of it dawn upon it. When this happens, the presence will be effortless and easy. He may even reach the stage when he can no longer bear to abandon remembrance or allow himself to be distracted from it.

Manners in Remembrance

Now you should know, may Allah have mercy on you, that there are courtesies to be observed during remembrance and that the most important and necessary is the presence of the heart. So, strive for it, for the invoker attains to almost none of the intended benefits and results of remembrance without presence.

Among the good manners of remembrance are also that the invoker maintains utmost courtesy, proper outward as well as inward demeanour and complete cleanliness and ritual purity. He should be humble, full of awe before the majesty of Allah, facing the Qibla, his head ever bowed down and his body as still as during the ritual prayer.

The servant, being required to remember Allah at all times and in all situations, may be able to maintain the above-mentioned good manners all the time, for instance, those in spiritual retreat or permanent service to Allah the Exalted. But more often than not this is not possible, so he must assign a time for remembrance when he may sit with all the required good manners, those we mentioned as well as others in the same vein. At all other times, he should still remember Allah without limits or conditions, whether he is standing up, sitting, or lying down.

As Allah, Exalted is He, says, فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ.

“So remember Allah, standing, sitting and on your sides.”¹

Do Not Neglect Remembrance

Let him beware of being distracted from remembrance at any time, for this is immensely harmful. The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ قَعَدَ مَقْعَدًا لَمْ يَذْكُرِ اللَّهَ تَعَالَىٰ فِيهِ إِلَّا كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَرَةً، وَمَنْ اضْطَجَعَ مُضْطَجَعًا لَمْ يَذْكُرِ اللَّهَ تَعَالَىٰ فِيهِ إِلَّا كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ تَرَةً.

“He who sits for a while without remembering Allah the Exalted, it will bring him remorse; and he who lies down for a while without remembering Allah the Exalted, it will bring him remorse.”

‘Remorse’ means regrets coupled with grief or regrets on the day when one is asked to account. The Devil may influence the distracted and be able to control him because he is neglectful of his Lord just as He Exalted is He, say, وَمَنْ يَعِشْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقِصَ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ.

¹ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 103.

“If anyone withdraws himself from the remembrance of the Most Merciful, We appoint for him an evil one, to be an intimate companion to him.”¹

And the Exalted says, اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ.

“The Devil has gained mastery over them and made them forget the remembrance of Allah.”²

It is natural to the believer to remember Allah in abundance, just as it is the attribute of the hypocrite to remember Him but a little. Allah, Exalted is He, say concerning the hypocrites,

يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا.

“They show off to the people but remember Allah but a little.”³

Persevering in remembrance and being constant drives the Devil away and stops its whisperings. It has been transmitted that, “The Devil has his trunk over the heart of the son of Adam so that whenever he remembers Allah he retreats, but whenever he is distracted, he gobbles up [was was] his heart.”

It is incumbent to keep to the remembrance of Allah and persevere throughout the day and in most circumstances. When a man said to him, may blessings and peace be upon him, “O Messenger of Allah, the injunctions of Islam are too numerous for me, so enjoin upon me a single thing that I can hold on to firmly.” He answered, “Keep your tongue ever moist with the remembrance of Allah.”

Excellence of Remembrance

Scholars, may Allah have mercy on them, have always considered that remembrance had more merit and priority over other kinds of good deeds because one can practice it all the time and under any circumstance. It has no set times but is required at all times. It can be practiced when in ritually impure, whether the impurity is minor [*hadas*] or major [*janaba*],

¹ Surah 46 az Zukhruf Verse 36.

² Surah 58 al Mujadalah Verse 19.

³ Surah 4 an Nisaa Verse 142.

as well as by those who are free and those who are occupied, which thing does not apply to other devotions such as ritual prayer, fasting, or reciting the Quran, for these have prior conditions, and there are times when they are not allowed.

The best of all good deeds is the ritual prayer, and yet is forbidden during about a third of the day, that is from after the dawn [*fajr*] prayer until the sun rises high above the horizon, and from after the afternoon [*asar*] prayer until sunset. As for fasting, it is forbidden in other than the daytime. While reciting the Quran is forbidden during major ritual impurity and discouraged when one is occupied with worldly things so that he cannot collect his heart, and this is because of the Quran's sacredness and majesty.

Remembrance, on the other hand, was left unrestricted by Allah the Exalted as a mercy to His servants and favour, together with making it lighter and less arduous compared with other devotions. Because of all that, remembrance is superior to other devotions, although some are superior to it in other respects. It is special to remembrance to be light despite its merits and to be capable of being practiced uninterruptedly, to the extent that when in a situation where to invoke Allah with the tongue is inappropriate, in the bathroom or during intercourse, for example, one should nevertheless avoid being too distracted to remember Allah in one's heart. So, have said the scholars who know Allah, may Allah have mercy on them.

Therefore, persevere in constant remembrance, may Allah have mercy on you, whether you are a craftsman, a manual worker or otherwise engaged in worldly affairs. Keep to remembrance in your heart and with your tongue as much as you can.

When you remember Allah the Exalted in your heart, which means allowing none to hear but yourself, you have done well and hit the mark. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

حَيْرُ الذِّكْرِ الْحَفِيُّ، وَحَيْرُ الرِّزْقِ مَا يَكْفِي.

“The best remembrance is in private (hidden), and the best provision is that which suffices.”

And the noble verse states,

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ.

“Remember your Lord in yourself with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings;”¹

Should you raise your voice with remembrance, being sincere with Allah, not distracting to others who might be praying or reciting the Quran to the extent of causing them confusion, then there is no harm in raising your voice. It is not forbidden; on the contrary, it is recommended.

Remembrance in a Group

Remembrance may be done in a group that has gathered for the remembrance of Allah. If they conform with the conditions we mentioned earlier, namely sincerity [*ikhlas*] and not distracting others who are praying, or engaged in something similar, then this recommended and encouraged. There are hadiths to that effect. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُرِيدُونَ بِذَلِكَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى إِلَّا غَفَرَ لَهُمْ، وَبَدَّلَ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ.

“No gathering of people in one of the houses of Allah (Mosque) to remember Allah the Exalted, seeking the pleasure of Allah the Exalted, without being forgiven and turning their bad deeds into good ones.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا قَعَدَ قَوْمٌ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى إِلَّا حَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَعَشِيَتْهُمْ الرَّحْمَةُ وَنَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ.

¹ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 205.

“No group of people ever sit together in a house of the houses of Allah, remembering Allah the Exalted, without the angels surrounding them, mercy enveloping them, peace descending upon them, and Allah mentioning them to those who are with Him.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِذَا مَرَرْتُمْ بِرِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ فَارْتَعُوا. قِيلَ: وَمَا رِيَاضُ الْجَنَّةِ؟ قَالَ حِلَقُ الذِّكْرِ.

“Whenever you passed the meadows of the Garden revel in them. They asked, “What are the meadows of the Garden?” He answered, “The circles of remembrance.” ”

Another version reported, “Session of Remembrance.” Also, in the long hadith which begins with, Allah has angels roaming the earth, searching for sessions of remembrance. He reports at the end, Allah says to the angels, “I ask you to bear witness that I have forgiven them, given them what they have requested, and protected them from what they have sought protection from.” The angels say, “Among them is so and so, a sinful servant who happened to be passing by and joined them.” He Exalted is He, will say, “They are the people whose companions never suffer wretchedness.” This hadith is well-known.

Determination of Remembrance

Some Sufis have opted for remembrance aloud and in a congregation, and their manners of doing this are well-known. Others have opted for silent remembrance. They have all been granted good patterns and straight paths from their Lord. May Allah have mercy on them and grant others to benefit from them.

Sufis acknowledge no equal to the remembrance of Allah. Upon it they depend, and with it, they are constantly occupied, once they have discharged their obligations satisfactorily and avoided forbidden things. They enjoin it upon their disciples and those who tread their path, and they take their oaths that they will persevere in it and make it their constant companion. Of the conditions and courtesies in the path, the most important and necessary is the remembrance of Allah.

Types of Remembrance and Their Merits

There are many kinds of remembrance, each having its own immense merits and reward. There are numerous benefits there, as well as noble results and effects.

The most noble and superior of all invocations is لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ.

The Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said, "The Best Remembrance is لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ and the best *dua* is الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ."

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said, "The best utterance that the Prophets before me and I have said is لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ."

And relating from Allah, he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ حِصْنِي، وَمَنْ دَخَلَ حِصْنِي أَمِنَ مِنْ عَذَابِي.
"La ilaha il lallah is My fortress, and he who enters My fortress shall be safe from My torment."

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

جَدِّدُوا إِيمَانَكُمْ. قَالُوا: وَكَيْفَ نُجَدِّدُ إِيمَانَنَا؟ قَالَ: أَكْثِرُوا مِنْ قَوْلٍ - لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ.

"Renew your faith. They asked, "How shall we renew our faith?" He answered, Frequently repeat *la ilaha il lallah*."

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ نِصْفُ الْمِيزَانِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلُؤُهُ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهَا دُونَ اللَّهِ حِجَابٌ.
"Subhan Allah fills half the scales, *al-hamdu lillah* fills them fully, and there is no veil between *la ilaha il lallah* and Allah.

There is a narration that stated that there is a pillar of light stands before Allah the Exalted. When someone says *la ilaha il lallah* this pillar trembles and when Allah the Exalted say, "Be still!" it answers, "How can I be still when You are yet to forgive he who has uttered it." Allah the Exalted said, "I have forgiven him." Only then will it cease to move.

Another hadith states that when a servant says *la ilaha il lallah*, it erases evil deeds from his record until it finds a good deed and nestles against it.

And another hadith states that, indeed, if the seven heavens and the seven earths and what they contain in them on one side of the scales and *la ilaha il lallah* on the other, *la ilaha il lallah* would outweigh them.

Much that is very well known has been handed down concerning the merits of this sentence. The intention here is to give examples, not to be exhaustive. It is sufficient to know that it is the word a human being enters Islam with and that whose life is concluded with it at the time of death wins perpetual bliss and will no longer be subject to unhappiness.

اللَّهُمَّ يَا كَرِيمُ، نَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تُحْيِيَنَا وَتُمَيِّتَنَا وَتَبْعَثَنَا عَلَى قَوْلٍ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُخْلِصِينَ، وَوَالِدَيْنَا وَأَحْبَابَنَا وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ آمِينَ.

“O our Lord! O Generous One! We ask that You make us live, die and be resurrected upon the saying *la ilaha il lallah* with sincerity, as also our two parents, our loved ones and all Muslims, *Ameen!*”

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said about, “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ، he who utters it ten times is as if he had freed from slavery four souls of the descendants of Ismael, may peace be upon him.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said “He who utters it a hundred times in one day it shall be equivalent for him to set free ten slaves, a hundred good deeds are inscribed in his record, a hundred bad ones erased, it shall protect him from the Devil until evening, and none shall have done better save one who had repeated it more times.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said “Whoever invoke, لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ، No other divine deed outstripped it, nor does it leave a sin remaining.”

The Excellence of other Remembrance

Other than the above mentioned, the next best and most comprehensive formulae of remembrance is,

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللهُ أَكْبَرُ.

“Transcendent is Allah, and Allah praises and thank belongs to Allah, and there is no deity other than Allah and Allah is Great.”

It is related from him, may blessings and peace be upon him, that it was the most superior of words and the best liked by Allah the Exalted.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, “Because of it for me to say, **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ.** is dearer to me than all that is under the sun.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, I met Abraham, may peace be upon him, on the night I was made to journey, and he said, “O Muhammad! Greet your community with Peace [*salam*] on my behalf and inform them that the Garden’s soil is fragrant and its water sweet, that it is made of plains, and that they are planted with

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said of these four phrases that “he who utters them, for each of them a tree is planted in the Garden.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said to Abu Darda, may Allah be pleased with him, “Say,

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ. for these are the subsisting good things, and they cause sins to be cast-off just as a tree casts off its leaves.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said of the phrase,

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ.

“that it is a treasure from the treasures of the Garden and a remedy ninety-nine ailments, the least of which is worrying.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said, “Whoever is granted favour by Allah and wishes it to endure should say repeatedly,

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ.

One of the best remembrances is **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ**.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“The best-loved words to Allah are **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ**.”

And when asked which phrase was best? He, may blessings and peace be upon him, answered,

“That the phrase chosen by Allah for His angels is **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ**.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said, For he who says **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ** a palm tree is planted in the Garden. For he who says it a hundred times, a thousand good deeds are recorded and a thousand evil ones cast off. “

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said, “He who says, in the morning and evening, **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ** a hundred times, none shall bring a better deed on Resurrection Day save he who has said it an equal or greater number of times.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said, “Two phrases, light on the tongue, heavy on the scales, beloved to the All-Merciful,

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ.

The Mother of the Faithful, Juwayriya, may Allah be pleased with her, said that the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, once went out of her house, then returned at midmorning and found her still sitting glorifying Allah. He then asked, “Are you still in the same state as I left you in?” She answered, “Yes.” The Prophet said, “I have said four words three times after leaving you. Were they to be weighed against all that you have said since this morning, they would outweigh it,

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ، عَدَدَ خَلْقِهِ، وَرِضَا نَفْسِهِ، وَزِنَةَ عَرْشِهِ، وَمَدَادَ كَلِمَاتِهِ.

“Transcendent is Allah, and all praises belong to Him by the number of His creations, and all that pleases Him, and the magnificent of His Thrones and the numerous of His Signs.”

The Excellence of Seeking Forgiveness.

Other remembrances that are of great goodness, blessings, an immense merits and rewards are asking for forgiveness [*istighfar*], invocations of blessings the Chosen Prophet, and Invocation [*dua*].

As for *istighfar*, Allah said of its merits and August is the Speaker,

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ، وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ.

“Allah shall never torment them so long as you are amidst them and He shall never torment them so long as they ask for forgiveness.”¹

And Allah, the Exalted say,

وَأَنْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ.

“And seek the forgiveness of your Lord and turn to Him in repentance; that He may grant you enjoyment, good and true, for a term appointed, and bestow His abounding grace on all who abound in merit! But if you turn away, then I fear for you the penalty of a great day.”²

And the Exalted said in recounts, about His Prophet Noah, may peace be upon him,

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا. يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا. وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيجعل لكم أنهارًا.

“Then I say, “Ask forgiveness from your Lord; for He is Oft-Forgiving; He will send rain to you in abundance; Give you increase in wealth and sons, and bestow on you gardens and rivers of flowing water.”³

And the Exalted say,

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا.

¹ Surah 8 Al-Anfaal Verse 33.

² Surah 11 Hud Verse 3.

³ Surah 71 Nuh Verse 10-12.

“If anyone does evil or wrongs his soul but afterwards seeks Allah's forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”¹

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
مَنْ لَزِمَ الْإِسْتِغْفَارَ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنْ كُلِّ هَمٍّ فَرْجًا، وَمِنْ كُلِّ ضِيقٍ مَخْرَجًا، وَرَزَقَهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ.

“He who perseveres in asking forgiveness, Allah shall grant him relief from all worries, a way out from every difficulty, and shall send him provision from whence he never expected it.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
طُوبَى لِمَنْ وَجَدَ فِي صَحِيفَتِهِ اسْتِغْفَارًا كَثِيرًا.

“Blessed is he in whose record has abundant pleas for forgiveness.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
مَنْ قَالَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً غُفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سَبْعُمِائَةِ ذَنْبٍ، وَقَدْ حَآبَ عَبْدٌ أَوْ أُمَّةٌ يُذْنِبُ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ سَبْعُمِائَةِ ذَنْبٍ.

“Whoever says, “I ask Allah for forgiveness” seventy times every day, seven hundred sins will be forgiven him; indeed those men and women are failures indeed who commit more than seven hundred sins a day.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
وَاللَّهِ ! إِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ فِي الْيَوْمِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً.

“By Allah! I ask Allah for forgiveness and repent to Him more than seventy times every day.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِدَائِكُمْ وَدَوَائِكُمْ؟ أَلَا إِنَّ دَاءَكُمْ الدُّنُوبُ، وَدَوَاءُكُمْ الْإِسْتِغْفَارُ.

“Shall I inform you of your ailment and your remedy? Your ailment is but your sins, and your remedy is the remembrance of Allah.”

¹ Surah 4 Verse 110.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

قَالَ إِبْلِيسُ: وَعِزَّتِكَ وَجَلَالِكَ يَا رَبِّ لَا أَبْرَحُ أَعْوِي عِبَادَكَ مَا دَامَتْ أَرْوَاحُهُمْ فِي أَجْسَادِهِمْ
فَقَالَ اللَّهُ وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلَالِي لَا بَرِحْتُ أَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَغْفَرُونِي.

“Iblis said, “By Your Might and Majesty, O Lord! I shall never cease to tempt Your servant as long as their spirit remains in their body. Allah says, By My Might and Majesty, I shall never cease to forgive them as long as they ask Me for forgiveness.”

Abdullah ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with them said, “We kept count in a gathering and found that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said more than a hundred times,
رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَثُبَّ عَلَيَّ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ.

“O Lord forgive me and accept my repentance; indeed, You are the Merciful that Accept Repentance.”

For this reason, you must, may Allah have mercy on you, repeat with great frequency this blessed invocation that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, considered of such a high degree.

In a report we received, it related that Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, was seen after his death in a dream vision by a pious worshipper saying that Allah had granted him to profit much from a few words he had heard from Sufyan al-Thawri, may Allah have mercy on them,

اللَّهُمَّ يَا رَبَّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، بِقُدْرَتِكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ اغْفِرْ لِي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ، وَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ.
“O Allah! O Lord of all things, by Your power over all things, forgive me everything, and ask me to account for nothing.” Therefore, you should also repeat with regularly these blessed phrases too.

A historical record stated that he who asks Allah for forgiveness for all men and women believers twenty-seven times every day becomes one of those servants by whose blessings people find mercy, it rains upon them and provides provisions for them. These are the attributes of the pious piety [*Abdal*] among men of Allah and virtuous servants.

The Excellence of Sending Blessings to the Prophet

As for invoking blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, its merits are immense, and its benefits for those who do it with regularity are abundant in this world. Allah, Exalted is He, say,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا.

“Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O you who believe! Send blessings on him and salute him with all respect.”¹

How greatly does Allah honour and exalt His Prophet? You can see in this verse and thus directs us His believing servants to invoke blessings and peace upon him.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ وَاحِدَةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَشْرًا.

“Whoever invokes blessings upon me once Allah blesses him ten times.”

Some authoritative scholar, may Allah have mercy on them, said, “Were Allah to bless a servant once only in his lifetime, it would be sufficient honour and dignity. So how much more would it be when Allah bless him ten times for every single invocation of blessings upon His Prophet?” May Allah be praised for the immensity of His favour and the abundance of His gifts.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ بِهَا عَشْرَ صَلَوَاتٍ وَزُفِعَ لَهُ بِهَا عَشْرَ دَرَجَاتٍ، وَكُتِبَ بِهَا عَشْرُ حَسَنَاتٍ، وَحُطَّ بِهَا عَنْهُ عَشْرُ خَطِيئَاتٍ.

Whoever invokes a blessing upon me, Allah blesses him ten times, raises him by ten degrees, inscribes ten good deeds in his record and removes ten evil ones.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah 33 Al Ahzab Verse 56.

أَوَّلَى النَّاسِ بِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً.

“The people who shall have the most rights upon me on Judgment Day are those who invoke blessings upon me most.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ قَالَ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَأَنْزِلْهُ الْمَقْعَدَ الْمُقَرَّبَ عِنْدَكَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَجَبْنَاهُ شَفَاعَتِي.

Whoever invokes, “O Allah! Bless Muhammad and grant him the seat nearest to You on Judgment Day,” he deserved my intercession.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ قَالَ جَزَى اللَّهُ عَنَّا مُحَمَّدًا مَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ، أَتَعَبَ سَبْعِينَ كَاتِبًا أَقْلَ صَبَاحٍ.

“Whoever invokes, “May Allah reward Muhammad on our behalf as befits Him,” he shall have tired out seventy (angels) scribes for a thousand mornings.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتُمْ، فَإِنَّ صَلَاتَكُمْ تَبْلُغُنِي.

“Invoke blessings upon me wherever you are, for indeed your blessings shall reach me.”

In a narration, it stated Allah has angels roaming the earth to convey to he may blessings and peace be upon him, the salutation of blessings of those of his community who invoke blessings upon him. Also, that none of his community salutes him without Allah returning his noble spirit to him so that he may answer them.

Shaykh ibn Hajar says in the book *al-Dur ral-Mandud*, “It is narrated that the Prophet said, “None shall ever salute me with peace without Allah returning my spirit to me so that I may salute him back.”

It is also narrated that Allah salutes with peace ten times he who salutes the Prophet, just as for he who has invoked blessings upon him.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

رَغِمَ أَنْفُ رَجُلٍ ذُكِرْتُ عِنْدَهُ فَلَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيَّ. . .

“Disgraced is the person before whom I am mentioned, and who does not invoke blessings upon me.”

In another hadith, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
مَنْ ذُكِرْتُ عَنْدهُ فَأَخْطَأَ الصَّلَاةَ عَلَيَّ أَخْطَأَ طَرِيقَ الْجَنَّةِ.

“The person before whom I am mentioned but who fails to invoke a blessing upon me, he has missed his way to the Garden.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, has bid us invoke blessings upon him in great abundance on Fridays in particular. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَكْثَرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ، فَإِنَّ صَلَاةَ أُمَّتِي تُعْرَضُ عَلَيَّ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ جُمُعَةٍ: فَأَقْرَبُهُمْ مِنِّي مَنْزِلَةً أَكْثَرُهُمْ عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً.

“Invoke blessings upon me in abundance on Fridays, for indeed, the blessings of my community shall be presented to me every Friday: Surely those closest to me in status are those who regularly invoke blessings upon me.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

صَلُّوا عَلَيَّ فِي اللَّيْلَةِ الْعَرَاءِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْأَزْهَرِ.

“Invoke blessings upon me during the noble night and radiant day.”

Meaning: Thursday evening (Friday eve) and Friday.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon every believer to invoke blessings in abundance upon the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, but even more so on Friday eve and Friday. He should join salutations of peace to the blessings, for Allah has enjoined both upon us.

A hadith states that Allah, Exalted is He, addressed the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, thus,

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيْكَ صَلَّيْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَنْ سَلَّمَ عَلَيْكَ سَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ.

“He who invokes blessings upon you, I shall bless him, and he who salutes you with peace, I shall salute him also.”

It is incumbent that whoever invokes blessings and peace upon his Prophet should also include his family; indeed, he may blessings and peace be upon him, desires this for them. It is narrated in hadiths to this effect. In some report states that the invocation of blessings but not his family is called the “incomplete invocation”. And Allah knows best.

The Excellence of Invoke Prayers [*Dua*] and its Manners

As for prayer [*dua*], Allah has prescribed, commanded and encouraged it. He, August is the Noble Speaker, say,

ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ. وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا
وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ.

“Call on your Lord with humility, in private fearfully. Indeed Allah loves not those who trespass beyond bounds. Make no mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order, but call on Him with fear and longing in your hearts. Indeed Allah’s Mercy is near to those who do good.”¹

And the Exalted says, وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا.

“To Allah belong the most beautiful names, so call on Him using them.”²

And the Exalted says, وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ.

“Your Lord says, “Call upon Me, and I will answer you.”³

And the Exalted say,

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

“He is the Living (One): There is no god but He: Call upon Him, giving Him sincere devotion. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds!”⁴

The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“Invocation Prayer [*dua*] is all of worship.” اَلدُّعَاءُ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah 7 Al-Araaf Verses 55-56.

² Surah 7 Al-Araaf Verse 180.

³ Surah 40 Ghaafir Verse 60.

⁴ Surah 40 Ghaafir Verse 65.

الدُّعَاءُ سِلَاحُ الْمُؤْمِنِ، وَعِمَادُ الدِّينِ، وَنُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.

“Prayer is the weapon of the believer, the pillar of religion, and the light of the heavens and earth.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَرُدُّ الْقَضَاءُ إِلَّا الدُّعَاءَ، وَلَا يَزِيدُ فِي الْعُمْرِ إِلَّا الْبِرُّ.

“Nothing can overcome Destiny but prayer, and nothing lengthens life except good deeds.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“Invoking Prayer is the core of worship.” الدُّعَاءُ مُخُّ الْعِبَادَةِ.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَهْلِكُ مَعَ الدُّعَاءِ أَحَدٌ. وَالدُّعَاءُ يَنْفَعُ مِمَّا نَزَلَ وَمِمَّا لَمْ يَنْزَلِ.

“Do not be feeble in prayer, for none shall ever perish who prays. Prayer is of benefit for events that are happening, and that is yet to happen.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

ادْعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْإِجَابَةِ. وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ دُعَاءَ مَنْ قَلْبٍ غَافِلٍ لِأِهِ سَاءٍ.

“Call upon Allah, be certain of being answered and know that Allah does not answer the prayer of a heart that is distracted and oblivious.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, commanded us to pray emphatically and forcefully, not to say, “O Allah! Forgive me if You wish.” But to ask assertively, eagerly, insistently, with the certainty of being answered, presence of heart with one’s Lord, fearful of being denied the answer because of one’s distraction and shortcomings in fulfilling the rights of one’s Lord, yet hopeful to be answered and obtain one’s wishes in the knowledge that Allah’s generosity is complete and His promise true. It has been transmitted that Allah is Ever-Living, shy and generous. He is shy of the servant who raises his hands to Him, to send him back empty-handed.

And in another narration states that none ever asks Allah without being answered. He may receive his request immediately, or greater hardship is prevented from reaching him, or his prayer is saved for him to receive in the life to come in a better and more perfect form.

Thus, a person should constantly be praying and imploring, whether in times of affluence or need, ease or hardship. He should never think that the answer is too slow appearing, nor should he despair. Allah the Exalted may have hidden purposes and benefits in delaying certain matters, and the person may be destined to obtain even more profit from whence he did not expect it. Let him pray and commit the matter to Allah. Also, whenever he asks his Lord for anything, let him ask simultaneously for gentleness, well-being, and a good ending. Let him ask Allah for every single thing he wants providing it should be pleasing to Allah of the affairs of this world or the next, whether important or insignificant.

He should not neglect to make his food Halal, for it is one of the most important conditions for prayers to be answered. A Hadith describes a man who travels for long periods, is unkempt and dusty, who raises his hands to heaven, “O Lord! O Lord!” yet his food is illicit, his clothes illicit, he is sustaining himself on the illicit, how can he possibly be answered? Once a predecessor said, “Prayer is like a key, the teeth of which are halal food.”

It is incumbent that a person should never neglect to pray, whether in times of hardship or ease. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

تَعَرَّفَ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي الرَّخَاءِ يَعْرِفُكَ فِي الشَّدَّةِ.

“Make yourself known to Allah in times of affluence that He may know you in times hardship.”

And, He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَسْتَجِيبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَ الشَّدَائِدِ وَالْكَرْبِ فَلْيُكْثِرْ مِنَ الدُّعَاءِ فِي حَالَةِ الرَّخَاءِ.

“Whoever wishes to be answered by Allah when hardships and afflictions strike, let him pray in abundance in times of ease.”

On the whole, prayer is one of the greatest favours of Allah upon His servants. He enjoined it upon them and encouraged them to do it, to the extent that He, August and Majestic is He becomes angry with those who do not ask of Him. As he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ لَمْ يَسْأَلِ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَغْضَبْ عَلَيْهِ.

“He who fails to ask Allah the Exalted, He becomes angry with him.”

It is incumbent that just as a person should pray for goodness and safety from evils for himself, he should do the same for his two parents, his loved ones, and all Muslims.

Let him beware to the extreme from praying against himself, his children, his wealth, or any servant of Allah. Should someone wrong him, let him leave him to Allah and be content with Allah's support for him.

A hadith narrated, مَنْ دَعَا عَلَى مَنْ ظَلَمَهُ فَقَدْ انْتَصَرَ.

“He who prays for those who wronged him, he already save himself.”

There is no good in evil prayers against an iniquitous person or any other for that matter. On the contrary, one should pray for him, for this is the attribute of Allah's compassionate servants.

Preferred Invocation

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said that he may blessings and peace be upon him, always preferred comprehensive, complete prayers, using no other.

Among such comprehensive Prophetic prayers are the following:
اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

“O Allah! I ask You for well-being in this world and the next.”

اللَّهُمَّ أَحْسِنْ عَاقِبَتَنَا فِي أُمُورِ كُلِّهَا، وَأَجِرْنَا مِنْ خِزْيِ الدُّنْيَا وَعَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ.

“O Allah! Make good the endings of all our affairs and protect us from humiliation in this world and torment in the next.”

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي طَيِّبًا وَاسْتَغْمِلْنِي صَالِحًا.

“O Allah! Make my provision beneficial and my actions righteous.”

اللَّهُمَّ الْهِمْنِي رُشْدِي وَأَعِزَّنِي مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِي.

“O Allah! Inspire me with the right guidance and protect me from the evil in myself.”

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَى وَالتَّقَى وَالْعِفَافَ وَالْغِنَى.

“O Allah! I ask You for the right guidance, piety, continence and independence from need.”

اللَّهُمَّ كَمَا حَسَنْتَ خَلْقِي فَحَسِّنْ خُلُقِي.

“O Allah! You have given me an excellent form, give me an excellent character.”

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ سَرِيرَتِي خَيْرًا مِنْ عَلَانِيَتِي، وَاجْعَلْ عَلَانِيَتِي صَالِحَةً.

“O Allah! Make my inward better than my outward and make my outward virtuous.”

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا، وَأَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا طَيِّبًا، وَأَسْأَلُكَ عَمَلًا مَتَقَبَّلًا.

“O Allah! I ask You for knowledge that is profitable, a provision that is licit and beneficial, and works that are acceptable to You.”

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ خَيْرَ عُمْرِي آخِرَهُ، وَخَيْرَ عَمَلِي خَوَاتِمَهُ، وَخَيْرَ أَيَّامِي يَوْمَ لِقَائِكَ.

“O Allah! Make the best of my life its final portion, the best of my works their concluding ones, and the best of my days that on which I meet You.”

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِي الْحَقَّ حَقًّا وَارْزُقْنِي اتِّبَاعَهُ، وَارْزُقْنِي الْبَاطِلَ بَاطِلًا وَارْزُقْنِي اجْتِنَابَهُ.

“O Allah! Show me the truth as true and grant me to follow it and show me falsehood as false and grant me to avoid it.”

اللَّهُمَّ اسْتَرْ عَوْرَاتِنَا وَآمِنْ رَوْعَاتِنَا.

“O Allah! Cover up our faults and shield our bad desires and feelings.”

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً، وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ.

O Allah! Grant us good in this world, good in the next, and protect us from the torment of the Fire.

Begin prayer with by praising and thanking Allah, and extolling Him, then invoke blessings and peace upon the Prophet and his family. Close your prayers in the same manner, then say, “Amin!”

Let every servant be abundant in asking for well-being in this life and the next. As a hadith stated that,

أَنَّ مَا سُئِلَ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ أَنْ يُسْأَلَ الْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

“Indeed, there is nothing more pleasing to Allah than to be asked by His servant for well-being in this world and the next.”

“Asking for well-being” is one of the best and most comprehensive prayers.

وَاللَّهُ وَلِي التَّوْفِيقِ.

Allah it is who grants success.

Many invocations and prayers of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, have been handed down. Some of these were designated for specific times or situations, and others were unconditional. He may blessings and peace be upon him, bequeathed them to his community, encouraged to use them, that they may cause them to obtain all goodness and be safe from the evils and afflictions that occur by the will of Allah the Exalted at certain times and situations. Those who persevere in them will be saved and secure. They are those who shall win and obtain everything. Those who neglect them, let them blame only themselves.

“Your Lord is never unjust to the servants.”¹

وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ

Imam al-Nawawi, may Allah have mercy on him, has collected a good number of those in his book *al-Adhkar*, to which he has adduced explanations and clarifications, valuable rules, and important observations, such as to reassure the heart and dilate the breast. May Allah reward his efforts and recompense him well on behalf of all Muslims. The author of *Uddat al-hisn al-hasin* has also collected a profitable number of these, may Allah have mercy on him.

We have also arranged for our companions a brief collection of the invocations specific to mornings and evenings, blessed by Allah the Exalted willing.

﴿وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ﴾

Allah speaks the truth and guides to the straight path.

¹ Surah 41 Fussilat Verse 46.

Chapter Nine

Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

You should know, O brothers, may Allah make you and us of those who uphold justice and enjoin it, that enjoining good and forbidding evil is one of the greatest pillars of religion and most important responsibilities for believers. Thus, does Allah command, both in His Book and through the tongue of His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, urging and encouraging it, and severely forbidding abandoning it. He, Exalted is He, says,

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ.

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.”¹

And He the Exalted says,

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

“You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah.”²

And He Exalted is He says,

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 104.

² Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 110.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ.

“The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practise regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.”¹

And He Exalted is He says,

لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ.

“Curses were pronounced on those among the Children of Israel who rejected Faith, by the tongue of David and Jesus the son of Mary: because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses. Nor did they usually forbid one another the iniquities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did.”²

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيَعْبَرَهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ.

“When one of you sees something reprehensible, let him change it with his hand if he cannot do so then with his words, if he cannot, then with his heart, and this is the weakest degree of faith.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، مُرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَدْعُوا فَلَا يَسْتَجَابُ لَكُمْ، وَقَبْلَ أَنْ تَسْتَغْفِرُوا فَلَا يُغْفَرُ لَكُمْ.

“O people! Enjoin good and forbid evil, before you pray but are not answered, and ask forgiveness, but are not forgiven.”

¹ Surah 9 at Taubah Verse 71.

² Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 78-79.

Enjoining good and forbidding evil does not prevent your sustenance from reaching you, nor does it bring nearer your appointed time. When the Jewish rabbis and Christian monks abandoned enjoining good and forbidding evil, Allah cursed them through the voice of their Prophets after which they were flooded with afflictions. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ كَلِمَةٌ حَقٌّ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ.

“The best jihad is a word of truth to a tyrannical ruler.”

When he was asked who the best of people were, he answered,

أَتَقَاهُمْ لِلرَّبِّ وَأَوْصَلَهُمْ لِلرَّحِمِ، وَأَمَرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ.

“Those who fear their Lord most, preserve their kinship bonds best, and are most active in enjoining good and forbidding evil.”

Do not Neglect this Majestic Order

It has reached us that once Allah, the Exalted punished a whole town, the population of which was eighteen thousand whose works were akin to those of Prophets, except that they never became angry for Allah.

It has now become clear why there is no permission to neglect to enjoin good and forbidding evil so long as it is practically possible. The person who neglects it and takes it lightly will have scorned one of the rights of Allah and shown disrespect toward what He has declared sacrosanct. Such a person has weak faith, and he is scarcely afraid or shy of Allah. If his silence is caused by his eagerness for worldly things, greed for wealth or social eminence, or fear that should he enjoin good and forbid evil his position will be weakened and influence lost with those sinners and wrongdoers that he speaks to, then his sin is great. But if his silence is due to his belief that he would expose himself to harm, whether this will affect his person or his possessions, then it is permissible for him to keep silent, but on condition that this expected harm is seriously damaging and certain to occur. Should he proceed to enjoin good and forbid evil despite this, his wage would be immense and his reward abundant. It would constitute proof of his love for Allah, his giving Him priority over his self, and his extreme zeal in serving His religion.

As He, Exalted is He, say

وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزَمِ الْأُمُورِ .

“And enjoin what is good and forbid wrong and bear with patience what is afflicting you; is the firmness of purpose in the conduct of affairs.”¹

How excellent is the state of a person who is beaten, imprisoned, or insulted for upholding the rights of his Lord, enjoining His obedience, and forbidding His disobedience, and this used to be the pattern of the Prophets and Messengers, saints [*auliyah*], virtuous righteous [*solihin*] and practising scholars [*ulama*], as is recorded in their stories and described in their biographies. There is no good in cowardice or weakness that prevent one from supporting religion and opposing the unjust and the corrupt, to drive them back toward the obedience of the Lord of the worlds. Be angry for Allah and jealousy when His commands are flouted and that is committed which He has forbidden and rebuked from are the attributes of Prophets and the truly sincere [*Siddiqun*], and this is how they were described and known to be, and what they became famous. Just as it was described in a hadith narration that indeed he, may blessings and peace be upon him, never became angry for personal reasons, rather it was when the sacrosanct limits of Allah the Exalted have trespassed that nothing stood before his anger.

Like, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said concerning Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, that he speaks the truth, and among people, he has no friend. Allah, Exalted is He, in describing His loved ones among believers, say,

أَذَلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ .

“Be humble towards the believers, mighty against the rejecters, fight in the way of Allah and not afraid of the reproaches of those finding fault.”²

It has now become clear how the complete believer cannot control his feelings whenever he witnesses reprehensible things being committed but must change them unless prevented from doing so by an overpowering cause.

¹ Surah 31 Lukman Verse 17.

² Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 54.

As for the hypocrites and those whose faith is very weak, whenever they witness blameworthy things, they come up with feeble excuses that are unacceptable to Allah and His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him. When they are insulted or acting or unjustly deprived of some of their possessions and remaining resentful for long periods. None of this is ever shown toward those who are persistently unjust, corrupt, and neglectful of the rights of Allah the Exalted. On the other hand, the behaviour of sincere believers is quite the opposite. They become angry for Allah, not for their selves, they stop their dealings with those who are disobeying Allah and neglecting His orders and dispute with them when they deny the truth, but they forgive and let go when the insult or wrong affects them personally. Observe how the two parties are different from each other, then join the better and more upright of the two.

اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“Seek Allah's help and be patient. The earth belongs to Allah, and He bequeaths it to whom He will among His servants. The ultimate end belongs to the righteous Allah-fearing.”¹

A Collective Obligation [*fardu kifaya*]

Enjoining good and forbidding evil is a collective obligation [*fardu kifaya*], which means that when some Muslims do it, the others are relieved of the obligation and no blame is attached to them. However, the reward goes only to those who acted on it. When the obligation is not fulfilled, all those will share in the sin and censure who were aware of blameworthy things being committed and were capable of stopping them, either by direct action or by exhortation, but did not do so.

How to Correct a Wrong [*Munkar*]

Once you witness a blameworthy issue, the first thing to do is to explain how wrong it is to the perpetrators, then to exhort them with gentleness, tact, and compassion to desist. If they do not respond, then

¹ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 128.

they should be admonished, frightened with Allah's punishment, spoken harshly to and rebuked. Finally, one resorts to physical intervention to put an actual end to the evil being committed.

The first two stages of the above, that of teaching with gentleness, and that of admonishing, and frightening, concern everyone and are generally possible. Usually, the person who pretends to be incapable of action comes up only with untenable excuses.

As for the third stage, that of putting a stop to evil by force and physical intervention, it can be done only by he who has given himself over to Allah the Exalted, struggles with his wealth and self in the way of Allah, and fears no reproaches or by those who are so authorized by the government.

In brief, a person should do what he can, should not neglect to support Allah's religion and should not seek a way out by coming up with unacceptable excuses that do not relieve him from the obligation imposed upon him by Allah the Exalted.

Enjoin Good Gently

You should know that gentleness, tact, mercy and compassion are most important when enjoining good and forbidding evil, so keep to them and never swerve away from them so long as you believe that the intended goal can thus be achieved. The hadith states,

مَا كَانَ الرَّفْقُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ. وَمَا نُزِعَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا شَانَهُ.

“Gentleness never comes into anything without embellishing it, nor is it removed from anything without blemishing it.”

In another narration,

إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ إِلَّا رَفِيقٌ فِيمَا يَأْمُرُ بِهِ، رَفِيقٌ فِيمَا يَنْهَى عَنْهُ.

“Indeed, only those should enjoin good and forbid evil that is gentle in what he enjoins, gentle in what he forbid.”

It is incumbent that a person should always comply with what he is enjoining and refrain from what he is forbidding, for this is how his words will have an effect on hearts and will be taken seriously, and this is the better and more worthy course of action. Severe threats have been proffered against those who enjoin good but do not practice it and forbid evil but commit it. However, one should enjoin good and forbid evil even when one does not practice what one preaches, for he who knows but neither practices what he knows, nor teaches it, is worse and deserves more punishment than he who teaches without practising. And Allah knows best.

No Compromise in Religion Practices

You should beware, O brothers, may Allah guide you, of compromise in religious matters, and this is to refrain from enjoining good and forbidding evil, and from proclaiming the truth or supporting justice, because anxious to please others in the expectation of obtaining something from them, money, influence or any other worldly profit. Seldom has anyone done this without Allah abasing and humiliating him, causing others to wrong him, and depriving him of that which they possess and he covets.

On the other hand, to engage politely is permissible, that is for a person to give away something of his worldly possessions to protect his religion, worldly affairs or his honour from the slander of evil people.

A hadith narrated states, مَا وَقَى بِهِ الْمَرْءُ عِرْضَهُ فَهُوَ لَهُ صَدَقَةٌ.

“Whatever a man expends to protect his honour is for him a charity.”

Thus, there is neither harm nor censure for a person to protect himself from the evil of evil persons by giving away whatever he needs to give, provided it causes him no religious harm, Allah willing! However, keeping away from evil people is better and more cautious.

The above only applies when one becomes afflicted with such people without having brought it upon himself, for otherwise an Allah-fearing believer is not permitted to keep company with people of evil and falsehood, on the contrary, he should avoid them and be wary of them.

Do Not Spy

You should beware of ‘spying’, seeking to know the hidden or shameful private affairs of others. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

Do not spy, وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ تَتَّبَعَ عَوْرَةَ أَخِيهِ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ، وَمَنْ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ يَفْضَحْهُ وَلَوْ فِي جَوْفِ بَيْتِهِ.

“He who seeks to bring out the shameful matters of his brother, Allah shall expose his shameful matters, and he whose shameful matters Allah expose, He will do so, even if he is in the innermost part of his house.”

You should cover up the shameful matters of Muslims, not talk about them or spread the news around. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

“Those who love to see scandal published broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and the Hereafter.”¹

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

“He who shields a Muslim from scandal, Allah will shield him in this world and the hereafter.”

Only a hypocrite, loathed by Allah, will always be talking of the faults, failings and shameful things of other people.

It is the duty of a Muslim, should he witness a fault in his brother, to keep it hidden and to counsel him in private, gently and tactfully. For, Allah shall keep helping the servant so long as the servant is helping his brother.

He who witnesses a blameworthy thing that he has no power to change or forbid should detest he who is committing it and detest his act in his heart. As he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ.

¹ Surah 24 An Nur Verse 19.

He should detest those of his relatives who persistently commit sins, and he should leave their place, for to witness wrongdoings by choice is not permissible.

He who is told to refrain from a blameworthy act but does not respond and persists in it must be boycotted until he desists and repents to his Lord. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مِنْ أَوْثَقِ عُرَى الْإِيمَانِ الْحُبُّ فِي اللَّهِ، وَالْبُغْضُ فِي اللَّهِ.

“One of the strongest bonds of faith is to love for Allah and hate for Allah.”

Do Not Dislike the Truth

Let those who are being enjoined good and forbidden evil beware to the extreme from arrogance, haughtiness, and rejecting the truth; or of saying to he who is counselling them, “See to yourself first!” or any other similar utterance explicitly rejecting the truth.

It is to be feared for such persons that Allah shall loathe them, that His wrath will afflict them, and that their state shall be similar to him whom Allah describes thus,

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ.

“And when he is told fear Allah, arrogance seizes him in his sin. Hell shall be enough for him and an evil ending place it is.”¹

As for him who is offering the counsel, this does not affect him at all, on the contrary, when he is rejected his reward will be greater, so let him be patient and bear with fortitude.

Let the person intends to deliver both himself and his brother from sin. Let his attitude be that of one whose brother Muslim is in peril, threatened with drowning or burning, for instance, when he is capable of saving him. He should be even more committed, for damaging one's religious affairs and exposing oneself to the wrath of the Lord of the Worlds is immensely more perilous than to lose worldly goods or even one's life. The consequence of the latter is only to leave this ephemeral

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 206.

life, this evanescent abode. There is no comparison whatsoever between ruining one's religion and ruining one's worldly affairs. He who is enjoining good and forbidding evil is striving to save himself, whether his exhortations are accepted or not. It has reached us that on Judgment Day some men will cling onto others who, not knowing them, will say, "What is it with you? We do not know each other!" To which they will reply, "You saw us doing wrong but never counselled us!"

A hadith narrates,

مَثَلُ الْقَائِمِ فِي حُدُودِ اللَّهِ، وَمَثَلُ الْوَاقِعِ فِيهَا كَمَثَلِ قَوْمٍ اسْتَهَمُوا عَلَى سَفِينَةٍ، فَأَصَابَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَعْلَاهَا، وَبَعْضُهُمْ أَسْفَلَهَا، وَكَانَ الَّذِينَ فِي أَسْفَلِهَا إِذَا اسْتَقُوا الْمَاءَ يَمُرُّونَ عَلَى مَنْ فَوْقَهُمْ، فَقَالُوا: لَوْ حَرَقْنَا حَرَقًا فِي نَصِينَا وَلَمْ نُؤْذِ مَنْ فَوْقَنَا؟ فَإِنْ تَرَكُوهُمْ وَمَا أَرَادُوا هَلَكُوا جَمِيعًا، وَإِنْ أَخَذُوا عَلَى أَيْدِيهِمْ نَجَوْا وَنَجَوْا جَمِيعًا. . .

"The likeness of he who upholds the limits of Allah and he who trespasses them is that of a boat on which are people. They drew lots, and some got to stay on deck, others below. Whenever those below wished to draw water, they were forced to pass between those on deck. They said, "Shall we drill a hole in our lower section of the boat so that we can draw water without annoying those above?" Should they then allow them to proceed with what they want, they would all perish. But if they prevent them forcefully from doing so, the two groups will be saved."

The meaning is that he who enjoins and forbids does so for his good, for he strives to save himself from the burden of sin that Allah would make him carry should he refrain to do so while capable of it. He hopes for Allah's reward and the generous promise He made to those who would support His religion and uphold it.

وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ. He, Exalted is He says,

"Allah will certainly aid those who aid his (cause);- for verily Allah is full of Strength, Exalted in Might, (Able to enforce His Will)."¹

¹ Surah 22 Al Hajj Verse 40.

And the Exalted says, **يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ**.
 “O you who believe! If you aid the cause of Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly.”¹

Among the most incumbent and important good manners of enjoining good and forbidding evil are to avoid arrogance, harshness, derision, and gloating over the sinners, for these things cancel reward and attract punishment. They may cause the truth to be rejected and may prevent people from accepting and responding to it.

So beware of them to the extreme! Be gentle, affectionate, flexible, compassionate, humble, and modest, Allah it is who grants success and support. Trust should be placed in Him and dependence should be upon Him.

We have already discoursed on enjoining good and forbidding evil at the beginning of this book when commenting on Exalted is He, saying, **وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ**.
 “Let there be a group from among you who invite to benevolence, enjoin good, and forbid evil.”²

We may have repeated some of that in this chapter, for it is the appropriate time to do so and may lead to an increasing conviction, and this is also because of our earnest wish to influence hearts beneficially, for this matter is essential and bears much elaboration, and even repetition, so immense is its place in religion and so general its benefit which extends to all Muslims, and in such a dire need are they for it, and this is even more so because so many people have taken to treating the matter lightly for no good excuse, people who would have exposed themselves to no harm doing it, and this is what has prompted us to discourse at length and repeat ourselves.

Deeds are valued according to its intentions and to each person what he intended.

¹ Surah 47 Muhammad Verse 7.

² Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 104.

Chapter Ten

Strive For Allah [*Jihad*]

We have thought it appropriate to quote here some of the Quranic verses and hadiths concerning *Jihad* and its merits in order to complete the benefit to be derived from the subject, for Jihad is a division of enjoining good and forbidding evil, but it is the highest, and the noblest and superior division, because it is enjoining the highest good, which is *Tawhid* and *Islam*, and forbidding the worst evil, which is disbelief and associating others with Allah.

Jihad begins with an invitation to Islam, before progressing to fighting with the sword. So many verses and hadiths exist concerning *Jihad* that they would be too numerous to exhaust. Therefore, we shall briefly quote some, simply for the blessings of discoursing on this noble principle of religion, one with which Allah has honoured Islam and Muslims and humiliated idolatry and idolaters. Allah, Exalted is He, says, كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ.

“Fighting is prescribed for you, and you dislike it. But it is possible that you dislike something good for you, and that you love something bad for you. But Allah knows, and you know not.”¹

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 216.

And the Exalted says, وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ.

“And fight them on until there is no more persecution or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah;”¹

And the Exalted says,

وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا. دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا.

“And Allah distinguished those who strive above those who stay at home by a special reward. Ranks specially bestowed by Him, and Forgiveness and Mercy. For Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”²

And the Exalted says,

فَاَقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصُرُوهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ.

“Then fight and slay the Pagans wherever you find them, an seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem of war; but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and pay regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”³

And the Exalted says,

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ. يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ. خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ.

“Those who believe, suffer exile and strive with might and main, in Allah’s cause, with their goods and persons, have the highest rank in the sight of Allah: they are those who will achieve salvation. Their Lord does give them glad tidings of a Mercy of His good pleasure, and gardens for

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 193.

² Suruh 4 an-Nisaa Verse 95-96.

³ Surah 9 at-Taubah Verse 5.

them, wherein are delighted that endure: They will dwell therein forever. Verily in Allah's presence is a reward, the greatest of all."¹

And the Exalted says,

انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ.
“Go you forth, equipped lightly or heavily, strive and struggle, with your goods and persons, in the cause of Allah. That is best for you if you knew.”²

And the Exalted says,

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ.

“To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged. Verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid.”³

And the Exalted says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعَدًا عَلَيْهِ خَفَا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ.

“Allah purchased of the believers their persons and goods in return is the garden of Paradise: they fight in His cause, slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth, through the Law [*Torah*], the Gospel [*Injil*], and the Quran. Who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded: that is an immense triumph.”⁴

The Messenger of Allah may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

جَاهِدُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ.

“Fight the idolaters with your possessions, yourselves and your words.”

¹ Surah 9 at-Taubah Verses 20-22.

² Surah 9 at-Taubah Verse 41.

³ Surah 22 al-Haj Verse 39.

⁴ Surah 9 at-Taubah Verse 111.

When he may, blessings and peace be upon him was asked, “Which are the best deeds? He answered, **إِيمَانُ بِاللَّهِ، وَالْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ**. “Believe in Allah and strive in the way of Allah.”

When asked the same question on another occasion, he answered, “Belief in Allah and His Messenger.” They asked, “Then which?” He answered, “Jihad in the way Allah.” They asked, “Then which?” He answered, “An accepted pilgrimage.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَعْزُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ. مَنْ قَاتَلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَوَاقَ نَاقَةٍ وَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ.

“Go forth, strive in the way of Allah. Whoever strives in the way of Allah for a time equal to a she-camel hiccup, he is assured of Heaven.”

Imam Namawi, may Allah have mercy on him, said that “Hiccups” means a period between twice milking a she-camel.

Abu Said al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that once a man came to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, asking, “Who are the best among people?” He answered, “A believer who strives with his person and possessions in the way of Allah”. The man asked, “Then whom?” He answered, “Then a believer who retreat in seclusion to worships Allah, sparing the people his evil.”

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

رِبَاطٌ يَوْمَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عَلَيْهَا، وَمَوْضِعُ سَوْطٍ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عَلَيْهَا، وَالرَّوْحَةُ يُرْوَحُهَا الْعَبْدُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى أَوْ الْغَدَوَةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عَلَيْهَا.

“A day standing-guard in the way of Allah is better than this world and what is in it. A piece of the Garden, the size of one of your whips, is better than this world and what is in it. For the servant to go on a sortie in the way of Allah, morning or evening, is better than this world and what is in it.”

In another Hadith, he may blessings and peace be upon him said, “Allah has given His guarantee to he who goes out or his sake: that should

he go out pure for My sake for his faith in Me and believe in My Messengers, I shall either admit him to the Garden, or return him to his house from which he set out laden with whatever wage or spoils he has obtained. By He in whose hand the soul of Muhammad is, none of you shall ever be wounded in the way of Allah without coming on Resurrection Day with the blood looking the colour of blood, but the odour that of musk. By He in whose hand the soul of Muhammad is, were it not for my reluctance to distress the Muslims, I would never have stayed behind an expedition setting out in the way of Allah the Exalted, but I find not the means to provide them all with mounts, nor are they able to provide them for themselves, and it would distress them that I should leave them behind. By He in whose hand the soul of Muhammad is, I wish I could fight in the way of Allah, be slain, fight and be slain again, then fight and be slain again.”

When asked, “O Messenger of Allah, is there anything that equals *Jihad*?” He answered, “You will not be able to bear.” They asked him again and received the same answer. The third time he answered, “The likeness of one who fights in the way of Allah is that of one who is constantly fasting, praying, humbly reciting the verses of Allah, never slackening in his prayers and fasts until the fighter in the way of Allah comes back.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مِائَةَ دَرَجَةٍ أَعَدَّهَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لِلْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَا بَيْنَ الدَّرَجَتَيْنِ كَمَا
 بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ.

“There are in the Heaven a hundred stages prepared by Allah the Exalted for those who fight in the way of Allah, the distance between every two degrees being equal to that between the sky and the earth.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 مَا اغْبَرَّتْ قَدَمًا عَبْدٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَمَسَّهُ النَّارُ.

“The Fire will not touch a servant whose feet have become dusty striving in the way of Allah.”

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَلْجُ النَّارَ رَجُلٌ بَكَى مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَعُودَ اللَّبَنُ فِي الضَّرْعِ، وَلَا يَجْتَمِعُ عُبَارٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَدُخَانُ جَهَنَّمَ فِي مَنْحَرَيْ مُسْلِمٍ أَبَدًا.

“He who has wept for fear of Allah will never enter the Fire unless milk returns into the udder and the dust raised in the way of Allah is never coupled with the fumes of Hell in the nostrils of a Muslim.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

كُلُّ عَيْنٍ بَاكِئَةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا عَيْنًا بَكَتْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَعَيْنًا بَاتَتْ تَحْرُسُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.

“Every eye will weep on the Doomsday except the eyes that have wept for fear of Allah and the person who kept vigil guard in the way of Allah.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ رَمَى بِسَهْمٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَانَ لَهُ كَعَدْلِ مُحَرَّرٍ.

“Who shoots an arrow in the way of Allah is like setting free a slave.”

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ اخْتَبَسَ فَرَسًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، إِيمَانًا بِاللَّهِ، وَتَصَدِيقًا بِوَعْدِهِ، فَإِنَّ شَبْعَهُ وَرِيَّةَ وَرَوْنَهُ وَبَوْلَهُ فِي مِيزَانِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“He who keeps a horse to ride in the way of Allah because he has faith in Allah believes in His promise, the horse’s fodder, water, dung and urine shall be in his scales on Judgment Day.”

Meaning: These shall be considered good deeds to his credit!

Supporting Those Striving in the Way of Allah

There are immense merits and rewards in spending for the sake of Allah and assisting those striving in the way of Allah. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ جَهَّزَ غَارِيًّا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ غَزَا، وَمَنْ خَلَفَ غَارِيًّا فِي أَهْلِهِ بِخَيْرٍ فَقَدْ غَزَا.

“He who support those striving in the way of Allah is like he strove; and he who takes care of an absent warrior’s family, he has fought.”

Once a man came to the Messenger of Allah, may blessings and peace be upon him, bringing a bridled she-camel, saying, “This is in the way of Allah.” He may blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَكَ بِهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ سَبْعُمِائَةِ نَاقَةٍ مُحْطُومَةٌ.

“On Judgment Day, you will get for it seven hundred bridled she-camels.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ أَنْفَقَ نَفَقَةً فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سَبْعُمِائَةِ ضِعْفٍ.

“Whoever spends for the cost of striving in the way of Allah, it will be recorded for him seven hundred times!”

In a narration from he may blessings and peace be upon him said,
أَنْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ عَلَى الْغَازِي وَلَمْ يَغْزُ فَلَهُ بِكُلِّ دِرْهَمٍ سَبْعُمِائَةِ دِرْهَمٍ، وَمَنْ أَنْفَقَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ فِي الْعَزْوِ فَلَهُ بِكُلِّ دِرْهَمٍ سَبْعُمِائَةِ أَلْفِ دِرْهَمٍ.

“Whoever spends for a person striving without himself taking part in the battle, he will receive seven hundred Dirhams for each Dirham spent; and he who expends to equip himself for battle, he will receive seven hundred thousand Dirhams for each Dirham.”

Volunteer in Striving for Allah

Volunteer in the way of Allah has immense merits. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

رَبَاطُ يَوْمٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَلْفِ يَوْمٍ فِيهَا سِوَاهُ مِنَ الْمَنَازِلِ.

“A day of a volunteer in the way of Allah is better than a thousand days anywhere else.”

And it has been handed down that he who dies volunteering continues to receive his rewards until Judgment Day and is spared the questioning in the grave.

Martyrdom Striving for Allah

As for the merits of martyrdom in the way of Allah, they are so tremendous that they cannot be counted. So honourable and great that their limits and quantities are beyond encompassing.

Allah, Exalted is He says,

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ. فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ.

“Think not of those who are slain in Allah’s way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord; They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah: And with regard to those left behind, who have not yet joined them in their bliss, the Martyrs’ glory in the fact that on them is no fear, nor have they cause to grieve.”¹

And Allah, Exalted is He says,

وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالُهُمْ. سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ. وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَفَهَا لَهُمْ.

“But those who are slain in the Way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost. Soon will He guide them and improve their condition and admit them to the Garden which He has announced for them.”²

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, “The martyr is given seven special things by Allah:

- is forgiven with the first gush of his blood,
- Sees his seat in the Garden,
- is adorned with the beautiful attributes of faith,
- is protected from the torment of the grave and safe from the Greater Terror of Resurrection.
- has the Crown of Dignity placed upon his head, each of its rubies being better than this world and what it contains,
- is given seventy-two wide-eyed maidens for his wives,
- is granted to intercede for seventy of his relatives.

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verses 169-170.

² Surah 47 Muhammad Verses 4-6.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, “There is nothing that Allah loves more than two drops and two path traces:

The two drops are a teardrop spilt for fear of Allah
 a drop of blood spilt in the way of Allah.
The two traces are a path trace in striving the way of Allah
 a path tracing an obligation prescribed by Allah.

And he said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

مَا يَجِدُ الشَّهِيدُ مِنَ أَلَمِ الْقَتْلِ إِلَّا كَمَا يَجِدُ أَحَدُكُمْ مِنْ مَسِّ الْقُرْصَةِ.

“The martyr feels the pain of being slain no more than one of you feels an insect bite.”

A hadith narrated that the spirits of martyrs are within green birds, eating from the fruits of the Garden, drinking from its rivers, then retiring to lanterns hanging from the Throne.

Another narrated that the martyr wishes to return to the world to be slain ten times again over, because of the merits of martyrdom that he is witnessing.

When the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, was asked, “Why are all people questioned in the grave except the martyr?” He answered, “The flashing of swords over his head is sufficient as a trial for him.”

Manners in Striving for Allah

One of the most important and incumbent things for those striving in the way of Allah is sincerity [*ikhlas*] in the intention, intending nothing but Allah’s sake, Exalted is He, the support of His religion and the supremacy of His Words. No other purpose should enter into this, such as being seen by others, being talked about by them and respected the spoils that might be won, or any worldly purpose.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ عَزَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَمْ يَنْوَ إِلَّا عَقْلًا فَلَهُ مَا نَوَى.

“Whoever strives in the way of Allah intending no more than to obtain a camel hobbling cord, he will receive no more than what he intended.”

A man once asked, “O Messenger of Allah! I stand in the rank intending it to be for the sake of Allah, but also so that people see me there.” He received no answer until Allah revealed the following verse,

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا.

“Whoever hopes to meet his Lord, let him do righteous deeds and admit no one as partner in the worship of his Lord.”¹

Another questioner asked, “O Messenger of Allah! A man may fight for the spoils, another man to be known, while yet another man wishes to be noticed. Which of those is in the way of Allah?” He may blessings and peace be upon him, answered,

مَنْ قَاتَلَ لِيَكُونَ كَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.

“Whoever fights to make Allah’s signs supreme is striving for Allah!”

And in the hadith whereby he may blessings and peace be upon him, mentions the three persons who shall be the first of Allah’s creatures to feed the Fire. He may blessings and peace be upon him said, “Another is a man who having been slain in the way of Allah is brought on Judgment Day, and Allah enumerates his favours upon him, then asks him what he had done with them. He replies, “I have fought in Your way until I was slain.” Allah will say, “You lie! All you wanted is for it to be said: “He is valiant!” and it was said.” Then he is ordered to be dragged on his face and thrown into the Fire.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said “Most of the martyrs of my community die in their beds. How many a man was slain between the ranks, but his intention is known only to Allah.”

The fighter should beware to the extreme from ostentation and desiring anything other than the sake of Allah. Let him restrict his intention to Allah and be careful to make it even purer when in battle. Let him be greatly concerned with setting his intention right, lest he is slain while his intention is tainted which will cause his deeds to fail, his reward to be revoked, and his end to be evil, may Allah protect us, and his situation to be extremely perilous.

¹ Surah 18 Al Kahfi Verse 110.

Another issue that the fighter should be extremely wary of is to flee from the battle at a time when it cannot possibly be permissible. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, consider this a ruinous matter, one of the greatest of major sins. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said, “Three issues are of no use in the presence in good deeds: Associating with Allah, disloyalty to both parents and fleeing from battle.”

He should also beware of illegally appropriating the spoils of war, for the sin of this is immense. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, cautioned strongly against it. Illegally appropriating the spoils of war is to take some for oneself, to the exclusion of the other fighters, without their knowledge or approval. And Allah knows best.

It is incumbent every Muslim should intend to strive for Allah’s sake [*Jihad*] and to reflect on it in one’s mind, to escape the threats proffered against those who do not. He may blessings and peace be upon him said, *مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَغْزُ، وَلَمْ يُحَدِّثْ نَفْسَهُ بِالْغَزْوِ مَاتَ عَلَى شُعْبَةٍ مِنَ النِّفَاقِ*. “Whoever dies without having taken part in a sortie or not having a desire to do so, he will die with some hypocrisy in him.”

One should also ask insistently for martyrdom, and He may blessings and peace be upon him, said, *مَنْ سَأَلَ اللَّهَ الشَّهَادَةَ بِصِدْقٍ بَلَغَهُ اللَّهُ مَنَازِلَ الشُّهَدَاءِ وَإِنْ مَاتَ عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ*.

“He who asks Allah for martyrdom with sincerity, Allah will cause him to attain to the degrees of the martyrs even if he dies in his bed.”

O Allah! Cause us to be of those who fight in Your way with their possessions and their selves, desiring Your good pleasure, Your favour and gifts, O Generous One!

We have discoursed on this subject briefly for the blessings [*baraka*] and good augury of discoursing on Jihad, for our reluctance to leave the book without any mention of it, and our wish that some Muslims will read it and see virtuous desire for it aroused in himself, we shall thus

have gained some of the reward reserved for the fighters. The authentic hadith states, he who points out a good deed is as if he who does it and he who enjoins right guidance shall receive a reward similar to that of those who obeyed him, without this diminishing their reward in any way. My success comes only from Allah; upon Him do I rely upon and to Him do I turn repentant.

Fighting the Inner-Self is *Jihad*

O brother may Allah have mercy on you, and you are now aware of the merits of striving in the way of Allah and its place in religion. He who can, therefore, hasten to participate in *Jihad*. Let him be resolute, determined and avoid indolence and neglect. He who is unable to, let him make the intention, be abundant in his prayers for those who fight, help them as much as he can, and occupy himself with struggling against his ego and passions to make them obedient to his Lord and Guardian, for this is part of *Jihad*. He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ هَوَاهُ، وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ مَا نَهَاهُ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

“The fighter is he who fights his passion for the sake of Allah, and the emigrant is he who leaves that which Allah has forbidden him.”

And it has reached us that he may blessings and peace upon him said to one of his Companions as they returned from an expedition,

رَجَعْتُمْ مِنَ الْجِهَادِ الْأَصْغَرِ إِلَى الْجِهَادِ الْأَكْبَرِ: جِهَادِ النَّفْسِ.

“You have returned from the smaller Jihad to the greater Jihad, the struggle against the ego.”

Muslims Fighting Each Other?

Among the most perilous of major sins and most formidable of ruinous crimes is for Muslims to fight each other for power and kingship, worldly goods, and the fanaticism and sectarianism that belong to the Age of Ignorance.

Allah, Exalted is He, says,

وَمَنْ يَفْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَعَزَّازُهُ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَعَظِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا.

“If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein forever, and the wrath and the curse of Allah are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him.”¹

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
إِذَا التَّقَى الْمُسْلِمَانِ بِسَيْفَيْهِمَا فَالْقَاتِلِ وَالْمَقْتُولِ فِي النَّارِ. قَالُوا: هَذَا الْقَاتِلُ فَمَا بَالُ
الْمَقْتُولِ؟ قَالَ: إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَرِيصًا عَلَى قَتْلِ صَاحِبِهِ.

“When two Muslims cross swords, the slayer and the slain shall both be in the Fire.” They asked, “This is the slayer, but why the slain?” He answered, “He was intent on slaying his man.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said in his sermon on the Day of Sacrifice on his Farewell Pilgrimage,
إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ دِمَاءَكُمْ، وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَعْرَاضَكُمْ كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي
بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا، وَيَحْكُمُ! أَنْظَرُوا لَا تَرْجِعُوا بَعْدِي كُفْرًا يَضْرِبُ بَعْضُكُمْ رِقَابَ بَعْضٍ!

“Allah has forbidden you your blood, possessions, and honour, just as this day of yours is forbidden, in this month of yours, in this town of yours. Woe to you! Be careful and do not revert, after I am gone, to being disbelievers, cutting each other’s necks!”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
سَبَابُ الْمُؤْمِنِ فُسُوقٌ، وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ.

“To insult a Muslim is corruption, and to attack him is disbelief.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
لَنْ يَزَالَ الرَّجُلُ فِي فُسْحَةٍ مِنْ دِينِهِ، مَا لَمْ يُصِبْ دَمًا حَرَامًا.

“A person believer shall remain at ease within his religion so long as he does not spill forbidden blood.”

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah 4 an-Nisaa Verse 93.

لَزَوَالِ الدُّنْيَا أَهْوَنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ قَتْلِ مُؤْمِنٍ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ. وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ سَمَوَاتِهِ وَأَهْلَ أَرْضِهِ اشْتَرَكُوا فِي دَمِ مُؤْمِنٍ لَأَدْخَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ النَّارَ.

“For the world to perish is of less consequence to Allah than for a single believer to be killed without justification. Were the inhabitants of His heavens and earth to share in killing a single believer, He would cast them all into the Fire.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ أَعَانَ عَلَى قَتْلِ مُسْلِمٍ بِشَطْرِ كَلِمَةٍ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ مَكْتُوبًا بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ: آيسٌ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ.

“Whoever shares, even with half a word, in the killing of a Muslim, will meet Allah inscribed between his eyes, “Despaired of Allah’s mercy!” ”

There are so many awesome warnings concerning this matter, so let a Muslim beware greatly and avoid exposing himself to Allah’s wrath, loathing, curse, formidable torment, and despairing of His mercy.

﴿نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ وَالسَّلَامَةَ،﴾

We ask Allah for well-being and safety,

﴿مِنْ جَمِيعِ أَنْوَاعِ الْخَزْيِ وَالْبَلَاءِ،﴾

From all kinds of abasement, trials and temptation

﴿فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى،﴾

In this world and the next,

﴿لَنَا وَالْأَحْبَابِ بِنَا وَكَافَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.﴾

For us, our loved ones and all Muslims.

Chapter Eleven

Duties

It is perhaps appropriate that we should include here a brief discourse on assuming public office.

O brothers, may Allah grant you and us constant success. You should know that there are perils in assuming public office and that the pursuit of them is arduous and wearisome. The believer who is concerned for his religion and keen to steer himself to deliverance and safety should avoid such offices as much as possible.

The Duties of Leadership

Among the most important public offices are those of leadership and political power, followed by judiciary positions, then responsibility for the properties of orphans, religious charity [*awqaf*] and other similar things, in all of which there are perils. Concerning leadership, he may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَوَّلُهَا مَلَامَةٌ، وَوَسْطُهَا نَدَامَةٌ، وَآخِرُهَا عَذَابٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Its beginning is ‘blame’, its middle is ‘regrets’, and its end is ‘torment’ on Day of Resurrection.”

And, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا مِنْ وَالٍ يَلِي عَشْرَةً فَمَا فَوْقَ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا جِيءَ بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَعْلُولَةً يَدُهُ إِلَى عُنُقِهِ فَكَفَّ عَذْلُهُ أَوْ أَوْبَقَهُ جَوْرُهُ.

“Whoever accepts the responsibility for ten or more people without being brought on the Resurrection Day with his hands tied to his neck, after which either his justice will set him free, or his tyranny will ruin him.”

It was narrated that rulers will be stood on the bridge that crosses over Hell. Those who had been doing good will be saved, but if they had been doing evil, the bridge would break beneath them, and they will plummet in Hell for seventy autumns.

In another narration stated that certain men had wished that they were hung by their hair to the chandelier between heaven and earth rather than to have assumed responsibility for the Muslims.

And concerning judges, he said, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
مَنْ جُعِلَ قَاضِيًا فَقَدْ ذَبَحَ بِعَيْرِ سَكِّينَ.
“He who is made a judge will have had his throat cut without a knife.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
مَنْ قَضَى بِالْجَهْلِ فَهُوَ فِي النَّارِ، وَمَنْ قَضَى بِالْجَوْرِ فَهُوَ فِي النَّارِ، وَمَنْ قَضَى بِالْعَدْلِ فَحَرِّيٌّ أَنْ يَنْجُو كَفَافًا.

“Whoever judges ignorantly shall end up in Hell, whoever judges unjustly shall end up in Hell, while whoever judges justly will have deserved to break even.”

Meaning: That if the good deeds in his record equal the evil ones and maybe he is saved.

Responsibilities of Holding Office

On the whole, a person avoiding public office is wiser and more appropriate. However, if a servant is tried with it, let him acquaint himself with what is due to Allah therein and what is due to His servants, then let him strive zealously to fulfil and uphold these obligations, neither exceeding the limits nor falling short of them, showing neither neglect nor shortcomings. Only in this manner will he escape the severe threats and obtain the abundant reward.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَيَوْمٍ مِنْ إِمَامٍ عَادِلٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عِبَادَةٍ سِتِّينَ سَنَةٍ، وَحَدٌّ يُقَامُ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِحَقِّهِ أَزْكَى فِيهَا مِنْ
مَطَرٍ أَرْبَعِينَ صَبَاحًا.

“A single day of a just ruler is better than sixty years’ worshipping, and a single statutory punishment implemented justly on earth gives it more blessings than forty mornings of rain.”

It was narrated that the prayers of a just ruler are always accepted, that none shall treat such a man with contempt but a hypocrite, and that he will be one of the seven who will be shaded by Allah on the day when there will be no shade but His. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْمُقْسِطُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى مَنَابِرٍ مِنْ نُورٍ عَلَى يَمِينِ الرَّحْمَنِ. . .
“The Appointed shall be on pulpits of lights, to the right of the All-Merciful on Resurrection Day.” The Appointed referred to those in a position to judge in just and fairness.

As for he who assumes power in a tyrannical and iniquitous manner, woe to him from the punishment and torment of Allah. So many hadiths have been handed down detailing how abased and loathed he will then be. Even though he may enjoy some pleasures for a while in this world, the consequences will be so evil, and he will be forced to endure such torture that he will wish he had never been created, nor ever been a being with a name. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ وَلِيَ مِنْ أَمْرِ أُمَّتِي شَيْئًا فَشَقَّ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاشْقُقْ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَنْ رَفَقَ بِهِمْ فَارْزُقْ بِهِ.
“O Allah! He who assumes charge of any of my community’s affairs and treats them harshly, treat him harshly! But he who is gentle on them, be gentle on him!”

And another narration states that a person in a position entrusted upon people then dies having wronged his subjects, except Allah forbidding the Garden to him.

O guardian that enjoy providential support strives to be just to your subjects. Treat them gently, look into their affairs fairly, find out how they are getting along and take good care of them, do not be so distracted or preoccupied as to lose sight of their interests.

Indeed, Allah shall ask you to account for those He places in your charge. Every responsible person shall be asked to account for the object of his responsibility.

You should beware twice over of treating your subjects with injustice and iniquity, and you will thus ruin your life in both this world and the next. .

Just as you are forbidden to wrong your subjects, you are forbidden to allow them to wrong each other. You are also forbidden to neglect inquiring after their interests. Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Were a small goat to die out of neglect on the banks of the Euphrates, I would fear to be asked to account for it.”

How much more does this apply to neglect the interests of orphans, widows, and the weak and destitute among Muslims!

The Duties of Judges

As for you, O blessed judge, you must be cautious and alert to the extreme to perceive the truth in each case and judge accordingly. You should beware of feeling an inclination toward one of the litigants. Should you notice any such thing within yourself, withhold judgment until they both come to be equal in your sight and it no longer matters to you which one is right and which one wrong.

You should beware of accepting bribery, for it is an abomination. The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, cursed he who bribes, he who accepts it, and he who has mediated between them.

Judge by what Allah has revealed to His servants, for August is the Noble Speaker, and He says,

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ. . . الظَّالِمُونَ. . . الْفَاسِقُونَ.

And whoever judges not according to what Allah has revealed, those are the disbelievers [kufur]¹. . . Wrong-doers [*dhalim*]². . . Rebel [*fasik*]³.

¹ Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 44. He, the Exalted, repeated the last phrase of this verse.

² Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 45. Three times Allah emphasised the negative character,

³ Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 47. *Kufur*, *Dhalim* and *Fasik*

Those are unjust and corrupt. These verses are clear and unequivocal of the Glorious Book which is never attained by falsehood, neither from before or behind it, a revelation of the One who is Wise, Praiseworthy.

Managing the Properties of Orphans and *Awqaf*

As for responsibility for the properties of orphans, it is a dangerous thing fraught with difficulties and hardships. It is most important and incumbent upon he who is afflicted with it to be extremely cautious and careful and strive to the utmost to preserve their property and increase it. Let him beware of neglecting or damaging it or appropriating or squandering any of it. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

وَأَتُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ أَمْوَالَهُمْ، وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْحَيْثَ بِالطَّيِّبِ، وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَمْوَالِكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حُوبًا كَبِيرًا.

“To orphans restore their property when they reach their age nor substitute your worthless things for their good ones, and devour not their substance by mixing it up with your own. For this is indeed a great sin.”¹

And Allah the Exalted says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا.

“Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans, eat up a Fire into their bodies: They will soon be enduring a Blazing Fire!”²

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, equated consuming the possessions of orphans among the seven most ruinous major sins. Not far removed from this in sin and deserving blame is to appropriate *waqf* properties unjustly and unfairly. Let he who assumes such responsibility beware to the extreme. It is safer to avoid it altogether to escape the perils and blame attached to it. Allah knows best.

Treat the Family Fairly

Just as it is incumbent for the man in this office to treat those in his charge fairly, avoiding injustice and excess or neglect in all heir affairs,

¹ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 2.

² Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 10.

so it is incumbent upon the head of a family to treat everyone with justice and equity, avoiding injustice or neglect, for they are his subjects and he is legally responsible for them.

A hadith says that a man may be recorded a tyrant when he is in charge of no other more than his family, and this is when he treats them unfairly.

نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى اللَّطْفَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ، وَالتَّحَقُّقَ بِالتَّقْوَى وَالْإِسْتِقَامَةَ،

We ask Allah, Exalted is He, to be treated with gentleness and granted well-being, and for the realisation of *taqwa* and rectitude.

وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ.

There is neither power nor ability save in Allah the High, the Formidable.

The Duties of Parents

You should know O brothers, may Allah grant us and you of those who are loyal and good, upholding the rights of Allah and those of His servants, seeking His good pleasure that loyalty to one's parents, the preservation of kinship bonds [*silaturRahmi*], discharging with excellence one's duties towards one's family, dependents, and slaves, and treating well one's neighbours, friends and all other Muslims, all belong to what Allah has prescribed and recommended, encouraged and urged, while forbidding abandoning or ignoring them, and threatening those who neglect and waste them.

As for the parents, Allah commands that we treat them with loyalty, benevolence and forbids treating them badly. He directs with the utmost severity and strongly warns against contravention in His August Book and by the tongue of His noble Messenger. He, Exalted is He, say, وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا. وَخُفْضَ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا.

Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not

to them a word of contempt nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say, “My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.”¹

And He the Exalted say,

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفَصَّالَهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ.

“And We have enjoined on man to be good to his parents, his mother bear him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning was in two years. “Show gratitude to Me and your parents!” To Me is your final goal.”²

You should observe, may Allah have mercy on you, how He couples the injunction to be good to the parents to that of His *Tawhid* and worship, and how He places thanking them for thanking Him.

He, the Exalted, say, وَعَابُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا.

Worship Allah, associate nothing with Him and be good to you parents.”³

And He, Exalted is He, say,

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى الْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَفَصَّالَهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ. أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ تَتَّقُلْ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَتَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ.

We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the child to his weaning is thirty months. At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years, he says, “O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Your favour which You has bestowed upon me,

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 23-24.

² Surah 31 al Lukman Verse 14.

³ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 36.

and upon both my parents and that I may work righteousness such as You may approve; and be gracious to me in my issue. Truly have I turned to You and truly did I bow to You in Islam. Such are they from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and pass by their ill deeds. They shall be among the Companions of the Garden: A promise of truth made to them in this life.”¹

Abdullah ibn Masud, may Allah be pleased with him, said, I asked the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and mercy be upon him, “Which deeds were best-loved by Allah?” He answered, “The ritual prayer in its proper time.” I asked, “Then which?” He answered, “Loyalty to one’s parents.” I asked, “Then which?” He answered, “*Jihad* in the way of Allah.”

And he may blessings and mercy be upon him, said,

رَضَا اللَّهُ فِي رِضَا الْوَالِدَيْنِ، وَسَخَطُهُ فِي سَخَطِ الْوَالِدَيْنِ.

“The good pleasure of Allah lies in the good pleasure of the parents, and His displeasure lies in their displeasures.”

And he may blessings and mercy be upon him, said,

ثَلَاثَ لَا نَبِيْعٌ مَعَهُنَّ عَمَلٌ: الْإِشْرَاكُ بِاللَّهِ، وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْفِرَارُ يَوْمَ الرَّحْفِ.

Three actions if presence does not benefit any good deeds: Associating with Allah [*syirik*], disloyalty to one’s parents and fleeing from battle.

And he may blessings and mercy be upon him, said,

أَكْبَرُ الْكَبَائِرِ ثَلَاثٌ: الْإِشْرَاكُ بِاللَّهِ، وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ، وَشَهَادَةُ الزُّوْرِ . . .

“The serious of major sins are three: Associating with Allah [*syirik*], disloyalty to one’s parents and bearing false witness.”

And he may Allah’s blessings and mercy be upon him, said,

رَغِمَ أَنْفٌ مَنْ أَدْرَكَ أَبَوَيْهِ عِنْدَ الْكِبَرِ أَحَدَهُمَا أَوْ كِلَا هُمَا فَلَمْ يَدْخُلَا الْجَنَّةَ.

“A person, may he be humiliated, whose one or both parents have grown old, resulting in him not admitted to the Garden.”

¹ Surah 46 Al Ahqaf Verse 15 – 16.

The meaning is that he will not be admitted to the Garden because he has not served them with kindness, loyalty when they grow old deserved special mention because older adults are in need for someone to look after them, manage their affairs, and serve them. And Allah knows best.

It has been transmitted that Allah, Exalted is He, say,
 مَنْ أَصْبَحَ مُرْضِيًّا لَوَالِدَيْهِ، مُسْخِطًا لِي فَأَنَا عَنْهُ رَاضٍ، وَمَنْ أَصْبَحَ مُرْضِيًّا لِي، مُسْخِطًا لَوَالِدَيْهِ فَأَنَا عَلَيْهِ سَاخِطٌ.

“The parents whose parents are satisfied with him daily, while I am displeased, I shall be satisfied with him. On the other hand, he upon whom has satisfied me daily, while his parents are displeased with him, I shall be displeased with him.”

And he may blessings and mercy be upon him, said,
 بِرُّو آبَائَكُمْ تَبَرَّكُمُ أَبْنَاءُكُمْ، وَعِفُّوا عَنِ نِسَاءِ النَّاسِ تَعِفُّ نِسَاءُكُمْ.
 “Serve your parents loyally, and your children will serve you loyally. Be chaste, and our women will be chaste.”

When a man asked his permission to go to *Jihad*, he may blessings and mercy be upon him, answered by asking him, “Are your parents alive?” And when he answered, “Yes.” He responded to him, “Let your *Jihad* be to them.” Which means: Strive arduously to serve them well, this shall be your way of struggling in the way of Allah.

Another man asked him, may blessings and mercy be upon him, “What rights do the parents have on their children?” He answered, “They are either your Garden or your Fire.”

And he, may blessings and mercy be upon him, said,
 مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُمَدَّ لَهُ فِي عُمْرِهِ، وَيُزَادَ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ، فَيُزِدْهُ وَالِدَيْهِ، وَلْيَصِلْ رَحْمَهُ.
 “Whoever wishes to have his life prolonged and increase his provision, let him serve his parents loyally and preserve his kinship bonds.”

And he, may blessings and mercy be upon him, said,
 ثَلَاثٌ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَنَّةَ: مُدْمِنُ الْخَمْرِ، وَالْعَاقُ لَوَالِدَيْهِ، وَالِدَيْتُ الَّذِي يُتْرَكُ الْحَبَثُ فِي أَهْلِهِ.

“Three will forbid to enter the Garden: whoever is disloyal to his parents, the alcoholic addict and he who brags about his charity.”

It has been transmitted that loyalty to one’s parents is better than Hajj, Umra, and striving in the way of Allah. Thus, whoever is disloyal to his parents, Allah will not look at him on Resurrection Day, and he will never catch a whiff of the scent of the Garden.

On the whole, the rights of parents are the greatest following those of Allah and those of His Messenger. Therefore, do serve them graciously, treat them kindly, obey them, and be humble in their presence. Give them priority over yourself, your wife, and children, when it comes to service, gifts and gracious treatment, never show them that you expect them to show gratitude, and never perceive their service as tedious. Examine their need for you and expectations that you will serve them and be good to them among the greatest of Allah’s gifts to you and the best of the good works He has granted you to perform.

Service to One’s Mother

And know that gracious service to one’s mother should exceed that to one’s father many times over. Perhaps it is because of the hardships at the mother endures during pregnancy delivery, lactation and bringing up and because of her overflowing affection and compassion. And Allah knows best.

Once a man asked the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and mercy be upon him, “Who deserves most of my service with good grace and love?” He answered, “Your mother.” The man asked, “Then whom?” He answered, “Your mother.” Again he asked, “Then whom?” And again, he was answered, “Your mother.” When he asked yet again, he was answered, “Your father.”

Service to the Parents after their Demised

Just as a person should serve his parents graciously during their life, so should he continue to do so after they pass away, and this consists in praying and asking forgiveness for them, giving charity on their behalf,

settling their debts, executing their wills, preserving their kinship bonds, and treating kindly their friends and those they used to love. These are all included under loyalty to one's parents, as stated in many hadiths.

There are great benefits in praying and asking forgiveness for the dead and in giving out a charity on their behalf. Therefore, no person should neglect to do so for the two parents in particular, then relatives, those with rights upon one, and all Muslims in general.

Forgiving the Children

Parents should help their children be loyal to them. They should be forgiving, not subject their children to too much pressure when demanding their rights, nor insist over much that it be done to perfection, especially these days when benevolence and loyalty have become scarce, and rebellion and disloyalty have become rife. When the parents forgive to their children, they save and deliver them from the sin of rebellion and the punishment it should attract in this world and the next, and they obtain a reward from Allah, a generous reward that is better, more perfect, superior and longer-lasting than their children's loyalty. He said, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, may Allah have mercy on a parent who assists his child being loyal to him.

Let parents beware to the extreme from praying against their disloyal child, for this can only increase him in harm, corruption and disloyalty. Some of this damage is bound to cause more harm to the parent in this world. Since Allah always accept the parents' prayers for or against their children, so they should pray for, not against their children. Allah may very well reform them through the blessings [*baraka*] of their prayers. They may then revert to being loyal. The result will be that their parents will again benefit from their loyalty and be greatly pleased with them, while the children will obtain the reward for being loyal and escape the sin of disloyalty.

﴿وَاللَّهُ الْمُوفِّقُ وَالْمُعِينُ﴾

And it is Allah who grants success and assistance.

Chapter Twelve

Rights

The Rights of Children

Children also have rights over their parents. They should be provided for so long as they need to be, educated with excellence, taught praiseworthy traits of character, excellent attributes, beautiful moral qualities, and protected from the contrary of these. They should receive good names, and before all this, their mothers should have been chosen from blessed, virtuous origins. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

تَحَيَّرُوا النُّطْفَ كُمُ الْأَسْكَفَاءِ فَإِنَّ الْعَرْقَ دَسَّاسٌ.

“Choose well for your sperm, marry those who match¹ for their lineage.”²

The father should be fair in providing for their children and not prefer one over the other simply because of his natural inclinations or other whimsical reasons.

The most important duty for father as concerns their children is to teach them virtue and courtesy, so that they may grow up loving goodness, accepting the truth, respectful of religious matters, but disdainful of worldly ones, always giving priority to things of the

¹ Meaning that spouses should be of equal social status and lineage.

² The lineage or genetic constitution of a particular family. Genetic traits penetrate across generations and are likely to appear in the descendants.

hereafter. Those who fail to bring up their children in a disciplined and virtuous manner, but plant in their hearts the love of this world and its appetites, and render them careless as concerns religion, then they see them rebelling against them, let them blame only themselves. Loss is more likely to affect the neglectful! Much of the disloyalty witnessed these days is due to neglecting what we have mentioned earlier, and this becomes evident to anyone who observes and reflects on how things are.

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ!

There is no Power or Ability except Allah, the High and Formidable.

Nurturing Kinship Bonds [*Silatur Rahmi*]

As for nurturing one's kinship bonds [*silatur rahmi*], which is being good to those close you, Allah order it in His saying,

“Give your close ones their due rights.”¹ وَأَتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَى حَقَّهُ.

And the Exalted say in praising those whom He has chosen and is pleased with,

وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ.

“Those who maintain the relationship as what Allah has commanded them, hold their Lord in awe, and fear the terrible reckoning.”²

Among the things that Allah had bid them is to maintain bands with relatives. And He, Exalted is He, say in warning and rebuking others from severing their kinship bonds,

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ.

“But those who break the Covenant of Allah, after having plighted their word to that, and cut asunder those relations which Allah has commanded to maintain, and work mischief in the land, on them is the curse; for them is the terrible home!”³

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 26.

² Surah 13 Ar Rad Verse 21.

³ Surah 13 Ar Rad Verse 25.

And He, Exalted is He, says,

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ. أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ.

“Then, is it expected of you, if you were put in authority, that you will make mischief in the land and break your ties of kith and kin? Such are those whom Allah cursed and so made them deaf and blinded their sight.”¹

Thus, the Book explicitly states that he who severs his kinship bonds is accursed. Ali ibn al-Husain, may Allah be pleased with both, counselled one of his children thus, “Beware of keeping company with one who has severed his kinship bonds, for I have seen such a one being cursed in three different places in the Book of Allah the Exalted.”

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَصِلْ رَحْمَهُ، مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُفِلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ.

“Whoever, believes in Allah and the Last day, let him nurture his kinship bonds; whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him treat his guest honourably; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak words of goodness or else keep silent.”

And, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُمَدَّ لَهُ فِي عُمُرِهِ وَيُوسَعَ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ وَيُدْفَعَ عَنْهُ مَنَتُهُ السُّوءُ فَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلْيَصِلْ رَحْمَهُ.

“Whoever is pleased to have his life prolonged, his provision increased, and be protected from an evil death, let him fear Allah and nurture his kinship bonds [*silatul rahmi*].”

And, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنَا الرَّحْمَنُ خَلَقْتُ الرَّحِمَ وَشَقَقْتُ لَهَا اسْمًا مِنْ اسْمِي، فَمَنْ وَصَلَهَا وَصَلْتُهُ وَمَنْ قَطَعَهَا قَطَعْتُهُ.

¹ Surah 47 Muhammad Verses 22-23.

“And, Allah, August and Majestic say, “I am the All-Merciful. I have created the womb [*Rahim*] and derived a name for it from Mine. He who nurtures it, I shall nurture him, but he who ruptures it, I shall cut him off (from My mercy).”

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَاطِعٌ.

“Whoever severed his kinship bonds shall not enter the Garden.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ الرَّحْمَةَ لَا تَنْزِلُ عَلَى قَوْمٍ فِيهِمْ قَاطِعٌ رَحِمٍ.

“Indeed, mercy never descends on people among whom is one who has severed his kinship bond.”

Now if mercy does not descend upon people in the midst of whom is one who has severed his kinship bonds, so how much more does the man himself deserve this? How immense shall Allah’s loathing for him be and cutting him off from all kinds of goodness?

You should be careful, may Allah have mercy on you, to preserve your kinship bonds. You should beware of severing them, for it is one of the greatest sins and its punishment is hastened in this life, after which there shall be severe punishment and painful torment prepared by Allah in the hereafter.

Similarly, the reward for benevolence and nurturing kinship bonds is hastened in this life, after which there shall be an immense reward and an honourable return. Once he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَسْرَعُ لَخَيْرٍ ثَوَابًا الْبِرُّ وَصِلَةُ الرَّحِمِ، وَأَسْرَعُ الشَّرِّ عِقَابًا الْبَغْيُ وَقَطْنَةُ الرَّحِمِ.

“Deeds that produce the swiftest of rewards are to serve and nurturing kinship bonds and the swiftest of punishments is that for injustice and severing kinship bonds.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا مِنْ ذَنْبٍ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ يُعَجَّلَ اللَّهُ لِصَاحِبِهِ الْعُقُوبَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعَ مَا يَدَّخِرُ لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ
الْبُعْيِ وَقَطِيعَةِ الرَّحِمِ.

“There are no sins more deserving of swift punishment in this life, before what is in the hereafter than injustice and severing kinship bonds.”

In my opinion, the reward for doing service and nurturing kinship bonds is thus both hastened in this life and awaiting in the hereafter, and so is the punishment for disloyalty and severing kinship bonds.

﴿نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ﴾

We ask Allah for Wellness and Safety.

It is incumbent upon a person to nurture the bonds between him and his kin, even if they do not reciprocate. He should treat them kindly even if they show no such kindness to him. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَيْسَ الْوَاصِلُ بِالْمُكَافِئِ، وَلَكِنَّ الْوَاصِلَ هُوَ الَّذِي إِذَا قُطِعَتْ رَحْمَتُهُ وَصَلَهَا.

“Whoever is nurturing kinship bonds is not the one who is reciprocating, but the one who when these bonds are ruptured, he rejoins them.”

It is incumbent that a person should also bear whatever harm comes to him from them with patience and not retaliate. On the contrary, he should forgive and pardon, keep speaking to them, and treat them kindly. The more severely they injure and wrong him, the more important it becomes to treat them kindly, and the more meritorious donations to them become.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَفْضَلُ الصَّدَقَةِ الصَّدَقَةُ عَلَى ذِي الرَّحِمِ الْكَاشِحِ.

“The best charity is that given to a relative who harbours rancour.”

Such a relative is one who feels enmity towards he who does him good. A man once complained to the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

إِنَّ لِي قَرَابَةً أَصْلَهُمْ وَيَقْطَعُونِي!

“I have relatives whom I treat well but who breaks the ties between us.”

At the end of the hadith, the man is told, “You will continue to be supported by Allah so long as you carry on behaving thus.”

Meaning: Nurturing kinship bonds and treating them with benevolence, even though they keep rupturing these same bonds and doing wrong.

The Excellence of Charity to Relatives and Kin.

It is incumbent that the person who is giving charity must not overlook his needy relatives and kin over others. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said, الْمُتَعَدِّي فِي الصَّدَقَةِ كَمَا نِعَمًا.

“He who overlooks (his relatives kin) is as if he withholds his charity.”

It has been transmitted that he who gives charity to strangers while aware that some of his relatives are in need, Allah the Exalted will not accept his charity. And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, الصَّدَقَةُ عَلَى الْأَجَانِبِ صَدَقَةٌ، وَالصَّدَقَةُ عَلَى الْأَقَارِبِ اثْنَتَانِ: صَدَقَةٌ وَصَلَةٌ.

“Charity to the indigent is charity, while charity to relatives is both charity and nurturing of kinship bonds.

In my opinion, this applies when relatives are not in dire need, for if they are, then it is rightfully theirs. Should there be enough charity to suffice both one’s relatives and others, only then would it be a charity for strangers and both charity and nurturing of kinship bonds for relatives. But if the person overlooked his relatives and charity goes elsewhere, while the giver is aware of their need, then this would be sinful and unjust, and this charity would be unacceptable, as related earlier.

The nearer the relative, the more rights he has and the more deserving of benevolence. The weak, destitute next of kin are more deserving of help, and kind treatment than more affluent ones and this is because the poor relative has two rights, that of blood relations and that of poverty. Allah coupled together with the commands to do good to blood relations and the poor in the verses of His Book. One example is His saying, Exalted is He, فَاتِذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ.

“So, give the kinsman his right, and the indigent and the traveller.”¹

¹ Surah 30 Ar Rum Verse 38.

Another is His, and Exalted is He, saying,

وَأَتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ.

“And give of your wealth, however, much you love it, to kinsmen, orphans, and the indigent.”¹

There are other verses. No doubt that treating a person who has two rights with kindness takes precedence over treating kindly another person who has one right only.

Let the fortunate servant strive to nurture his ties with relatives in whatever manner he is able, like kindness, service, gifts, donations, visits and comforting. He should make the appropriate choice as to which of these is suitable with each of his relatives, so he will have discharged his duties toward them, nurtured his kinship bonds, and comforted them. He should never fail to nurture his kinship bonds out of indolence or avarice, treating lightly those bonds to which Allah has attributed so much importance and severely threatened those who sever them. Every servant’s duty is to perform his best, according to his means, and be certain that Allah will assist and forgive. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

صَلُّوا أَرْحَاكُمْ وَلَوْ بِالسَّلَامِ.

“Keep your kinship ties, even if by simply greeting them with salam.”

These days, severing kinship bonds and lack of concern for helping and treating them with kindness has become rife. It may be that this is why the land has become afflicted with poverty and scarcity of provision, for it has been handed down that preserving kinship bonds lengthens lives and increases wealth.

And that Allah has increased certain people’s provisions and accrued their wealth, although He has never looked at them since he created them, and this is only for the preservation of their kinship bonds. Severing bonds and abandoning kindness will have the opposite effect.

﴿وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ﴾

And Allah knows best.

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 177.

The Rights of Wives and Dependents

As for wives and those whom a person is responsible for providing and looking after, he should cover their expenditure, provide for them, fulfil their rights, teach them their religious duties and all that they need to know for their salvation and safety in the hereafter. He must also impose upon them obedience to the commands of Allah and avoidance of what He has forbidden. Regards to women rights,

Allah, Exalted is He, says, وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ.

“And they (women) shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable.”¹

And the Exalted says, وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ.

“Live with them in kindness and equity.”²

And the Exalted says, فَإِنْ أَطَعْتُم مِّنْهُنَّ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا.

“When they to obedience, do not seek ways to wrong them.”³

The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“Treat women well.” اسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا.

He frequently instructed the men to treat women with kindness and benevolence. He may blessings and peace be upon him said,

“The best among you are the best to their women.” خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ.

The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ، وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي.

“The best among you are the best to his family, and I am the best among you as to my family.”

Therefore, it is incumbent for a man to treat his women well, be gentle, solicitous for their welfare, compassionate, and patient whenever they are harsh or behave discourteously. He should not be too demanding of his rights upon them.

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 228.

² Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 19.

³ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 34.

As for the rights of Allah, he should insist that they be fulfilled. No laxity in this is permissible.

Also, it is incumbent that he should not surrender the management of his affairs to the woman, giving her power over himself and his wealth, as some heedless fools do. This is reprehensible both in terms of *Shari'a* and rationality. The woman is in the same position as a bondmaid or a follower. He who makes his bondmaid or follower his master has turned life upside down and headed the wrong way. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ امْرَأَةٌ.

“No people shall succeed who surrender their leadership to a woman.”

And al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “No man shall obey his wife in all her whims without Allah casting him into the Fire.”

Fairness Between the Wives

A man who has two or more wives is obliged to be fair. If he fails to treat them equally, he will be accountable for his sin and deserving of censure. The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ كَانَتْ عِنْدَهُ امْرَأَتَانِ فَلَمْ يَعْدِلْ بَيْنَهُمَا جَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَشِقُّهُ سَاقِطٌ.

“He who has two wives and does not treat them equally, he will come on Judgment Day with one of his sides drooping.”

The Rights of Husbands

The rights of a husband over his wife are among the greatest. If she fulfils these, she will obtain abundant rewards, whereas if she neglects them, she will earn great sins. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَوْ أَمَرْتُ أَحَدًا أَنْ يَسْجُدَ لِأَحَدٍ لَأَمَرْتُ الْمَرْأَةَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِزَوْجِهَا.

“Were I to command a person to prostrate himself before another, I would have commanded the wife to prostrate herself before her husband.”

So great is his right upon her. And, He may blessings and peace be upon him, said, *أَيُّمَا امْرَأَةٍ بَاتَتْ وَزَوْجُهَا عَنْهَا رَاضٍ دَخَلَتْ الْجَنَّةَ.*

“Any woman whose husband is satisfied with her at the time she dies will be admitted to the Garden.”

And, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, *إِذَا صَلَّتِ الْمَرْأَةُ حَمْسَهَا، وَصَامَتْ شَهْرَهَا، وَحَفِظَتْ فَرْجَهَا، وَأَطَاعَتْ زَوْجَهَا، قِيلَ لَهَا: أُدْخِلِي مِنْ أَيِّ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ شِئْتَ.*

“The woman who performs her five prayers, fast her month, guards her private parts and obeys her husband, it will be said to her, “Enter the Garden from any of the doors you choose to.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said, *لَا يَنْظُرُ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى إِلَى امْرَأَةٍ لَا تَشْكُرُ زَوْجَهَا وَهِيَ لَا تَسْتَغْنِي عَنْهُ.*

“Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, never looks at a woman who does not thank her husband, when she can never do without him.”

The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said, *إِذَا دَعَا الرَّجُلُ زَوْجَتَهُ إِلَى فِرَاشِهِ فَلَمْ تَأْتِهِ فَبَاتَ غَضَبًا عَلَيْهِمَا لَعَنَتَهَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ حَتَّى تُصْبِحَ.*

“When a man invites his wife to his bed, and she refuses, so that he spends the night angry with her, the angels will curse her until morning breaks.”

A wife should then obey her husband, not oppose him. She should not dispose of anything in his house, give charity out of his money or leave the house without his permission. Should she do any of this without permission, she will have sinned. When he invites her to his bed, she is not allowed to refuse except for a legally acceptable excuse.

On the whole, the rights of a husband over his wife are immense, to the extent that the Prophet said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

لَوْ كَانَ بِالرَّجُلِ جِرَاحَةٌ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ إِلَى قَدَمِهِ فَلَحَسَتْهَا الْمَرْأَةُ بِلِسَانِهَا لَمْ تَقُمْ بِحَقِّهِ عَلَيْهَا.

“If a man happens to have an ulcer and his wife licks it, she would still not have fulfilled his rights.”

Therefore, it is incumbent that women strive to fulfil their husbands’ rights and avoid neglecting any of them, that they may obtain Allah’s reward and good pleasure, escape his punishment and wrath.

On the other hand, a husband should forgive his wife some of her shortcomings and avoid demanding his rights too meticulously, so as not to drive her into failing in her duties. Women are imperfect in both their understanding and their religion. They often take their duties lightly toward their husbands and act neglectfully. He who is indulgent, Allah will treat him with indulgence. He who overlooks mistakes, Allah will overlook his.

Merits of Marriage

You should know, may Allah have mercy on you, that marriage has many merits, advantages and benefits, both in this life and the next. There is much encouragement toward it in the Book and Sunna.

The Exalted says, **فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ**.
“Marry those women you please, two, three or four.”¹

And the Exalted says,
وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُعْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ.

“Marry those among you who are single or the virtuous ones among your male or female servants: If they are poor, Allah will enrich them of His favour. Allah is Vast, Knowing.”²

The Messenger of Allah said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

¹ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 3.

² Surah 24 An Nur Verse 32.

يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ، مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصَرِ، وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ،
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ؛ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ.

“O young people! He who is able, let him marry, for it helps one lower his gaze and protect his private parts. He who is unable to, let him fast, for it diminishes lust.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَلْقَى اللَّهَ طَاهِرًا مُطَهَّرًا فَلْيَتَزَوَّجِ الْخَرَائِرَ.

“Whoever wishes to meet Allah pure and purified let him marry free women.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

أَرْبَعٌ مِنْ سُنَنِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ: الْحَيَاءُ وَالتَّعَطُّرُ، وَالسِّوَاكُ وَالنِّكَاحُ.

“Four things are among the prophetic practices of the Messengers: Modesty, perfume, toothbrush [siwak] and marriage.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

تَنَاجَوْا تَكَاثَرُوا فَإِنِّي مُكَاثِّرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Marry and multiple, for indeed, you will outnumber the other communities on Resurrection Day.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِذَا تَزَوَّجَ الْعَبْدُ فَقَدْ اسْتَكْمَلَ نِصْفَ الدِّينِ. فَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ فِي النِّصْفِ الْبَاقِي.

“When the servant marries, he has completed half his religion, let him fear Allah in the other half.”

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, said, “There is no reason for not marrying save inability or immorality.”

In my opinion, marriage frees the heart from the whisperings of the Devil concerning women, such as may occur to a man during ritual prayer as he stands before Allah, during reciting the Quran or remembering Allah, which thing makes him discourteous toward Allah.

Marriage helps to keep one's gaze down and to protect one's private parts. The merits of such benefits have been detailed in the Book and *Sunna* in such a manner as not to escape the notice of any knowledgeable, insightful person.

Allah, the Exalted says,

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ.

“Tell the believers to lower their gaze and guard their private parts, and this is purer for them; indeed, Allah is aware of what they do.”¹

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

النَّظَرُ سَهْمٌ مَسْمُومٌ مِنْ سَهَامِ إِبْلِيسَ . . .

“The gaze is one of the poisoned arrows of Iblis. . .”

Marriage requires patience in treating women with kindness, fulfilling their rights, and providing for them and the children. There is great merit in this, in addition to the merit of being the cause of procreating righteous offspring that will worship Allah the Exalted, pray for their parents, and ask forgiveness for them during the latter's lifetimes and after their deaths. Some of the children may die before puberty, which thing attracts immense reward for the parents

There are great merits and abundant rewards in raising children and looking after them well, especially if they are girls. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

دِينَارٌ أَنْفَقْتَهُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَدِينَارٌ أَنْفَقْتَهُ فِي رَقَبَةٍ، وَدِينَارٌ تَصَدَّقْتَ بِهِ عَلَى مِسْكِينٍ، وَدِينَارٌ أَنْفَقْتَهُ عَلَى أَهْلِكَ، أَعْظَمُهَا أَجْرًا الَّذِي أَنْفَقْتَهُ عَلَى أَهْلِكَ.

If you spend a Dinar in the way of Allah, a Dinar to free a slave, a Dinar in charity to a poor person, or a Dinar on your family, the greatest reward will be for that spent on your family.

¹ Surah 24 An Nur Verse 30.

And he may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,
 مَا أَطْعَمْتَ نَفْسَكَ فَهُوَ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ، وَمَا أَطْعَمْتَ وَلَدَكَ فَهُوَ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ، وَمَا أَطْعَمْتَ
 زَوْجَكَ فَهُوَ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ، وَمَا أَطْعَمْتَ خَادِمَكَ فَهُوَ لَكَ صَدَقَةٌ.

“That which you feed yourself is for you a charity, that which you feed your child is for you a charity, that which you feed your wife is for you a charity, and that which you feed your servant is for you a charity.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 إِذَا مَاتَ ابْنُ آدَمَ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ: صَدَقَةٌ جَارِيَةٌ، أَوْ عِلْمٌ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، أَوْ وَلَدٌ
 صَالِحٌ يَدْعُو لَهُ.

“Once the son of Adam dies, his deeds cease except three: A running charity, knowledge that is useful or a righteous son who pray for him.”

Reward on the Death of a Child

He, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, also said,
 مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَمُوتُ لَهُ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْوُلَدِ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحِجْنَ إِلَّا أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ الْجَنَّةَ
 بِفَضْلِ رَحْمَتِهِ إِيَّاهُمْ.

“No Muslim loses three of his children who die before puberty without Allah admitting him to the Garden because of his grief over them.”

In one version, a woman asked, “Or two?” And he answered, “Or two.” And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَإِنْ أُقَدِّمَ سُقْطًا أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَنْ أُحْلِفَ خَمْسِينَ فَارِسًا يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.

“To send forward to the hereafter a miscarried fetus would be more pleasing to me than to beget fifty fully armed men.”

It has been handed down that children shall be given vessels full of the beverage from the Garden to give their parents to drink on Resurrection Day when people will be suffering hardship and thirst such as only Allah knows. They shall stand at the gates of the Garden and refuse to enter until their parents are admitted so that Allah shall order their parents to the Garden along with them by His mercy.

Be Kind and Loving to Daughters

He may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,

مَنْ أُبْتُلِيَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْبَنَاتِ بِشَيْءٍ فَأَحْسَنَ إِلَيْهِنَّ كُنَّ لَهُ سِتْرًا مِنَ النَّارِ.

“He who is tested with girls (daughters) and raises them well, they will be a barrier between him and the Fire.”

And, He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ كَانَ لَهُ ثَلَاثُ بَنَاتٍ يُؤَدِّبُهُنَّ وَيَرْحَمُهُنَّ وَيَكْفُلُهُنَّ وَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ الْبَتَّةَ.

“Whoever have three daughters, brings them up well, treats them kindly and provides for them, inevitably he will enter the Garden.”

They asked, “O Messenger of Allah! What if they were only two?” He answered, “Even if they have only two.” Some of those who were present remarked that had they said, “And only one?” He would have said, “And even if only one.”

And, he, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said, “He who begets a female, does not bury her, nor humiliate her, nor prefer his male children over her, Allah shall admit him to the Garden. The words do not bury her, refer to the practice of the Age of Ignorance [*Jahiliyah*] of burying alive their female offspring.

When informed that they have begotten a female, or even that someone else has, certain stupid people, utter abominable things such as they should not, to show their hatred for girls and this is ugly and detestable, not far removed from the way Allah describes the people of the Age of Ignorance in His saying,

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنْثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ. يَتَوَارَىٰ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهِ أَيُمْسِكُهُ عَلَىٰ هُونٍ أَمْ يَدُسُّهُ فِي التُّرَابِ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ.

“When news is brought to one of them, of the birth of a female child, his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide from his people, because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain it on sufferance and contempt, or bury it in the dust? Ah! what an evil choice they decide on?”¹

¹ Surah 16 An Nahl Verse 58-59.

Let the Allah-fearing believer beware of this, of aversion to his female children, of offending them, or of preferring his male children over them, for he does not know in which of his children the blessings will be, nor which of them will deserve a good ending to their lives.

Choosing a Wife

It is incumbent for he who wishes to marry should seek a woman who is religious, good, and virtuous, even if poor or not very comely. The Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, has exhorted and encouraged us to seek the religious woman.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said: "Choose a religious woman, may your hands be blessed." Therefore, a man should never marry a woman only for her wealth or her beauty, for this is detestable.

He said, may blessings and peace be upon him, "Do not marry women for their beauty, for that very beauty may cause their perdition. Do not marry them for their wealth, for that very wealth may make them over-bearing. But marry them for their religion."

Bachelor

Then there is he who wishes not to marry to devote himself to acquire knowledge and worshipping activities and to be free from worldly preoccupations and attachments. If his heart is free from any desire for women, there is no harm and no sin in not marrying. A few of our virtuous predecessors, may Allah have mercy on them, and also latecomers who have done this. One of them was asked, "Will you not marry?" He answered, "I have failed to reform my ego. How can I burden myself with another?" When asked the same question, another replied, "Were I able to divorce my ego, I would have married." As for Bishr ibn al-Hārith, may Allah have mercy on him, when they said to him, "People are talking about you, they say you have forsaken the prophetic practises [*Sunna*]." He answered, "Tell them, "He is fully occupied with the obligatory."

In my opinion, he who wishes to marry should do so intending it to be of assistance to him in both his religious and worldly affairs, while he who abstains should intend thereby to protect his religion and opt for caution to be safe. Thus, should both marriage and abstention be according to a righteous intention that will draw one nearer to Allah.

As for he who intends, in either case, nothing but worldly aims and gains and the satisfaction of his natural inclinations and appetites, he is far removed from right conduct and the emulation of our virtuous ancestors. Allah is the One to grant success and assistance, and there is no Lord other than He.

The Rights of Slaves

It is enjoined and encouraged to treat those in your charge and slaves very well. Allah, Exalted is He, say,

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ
وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ.

“Worship Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and treat the parents well, also the kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer you meet and what your right hands possess.”¹

And the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said, “The slave should be given food and clothes with kindness, and he should not be charged with more work than he is capable of.”

And may blessings and peace be upon him said, “Fear Allah in what your right hands own. Feed them of what you eat, clothe them of what you wear, and do not charge them with more work than they are capable of. Those you like, keep them, those you do not, sell, but do not torment Allah’s creatures, for, though Allah, Exalted is He, has made them your property, had He so wished, He would have made you theirs.” Once a man asked, “O Messenger of Allah, how many times should we

¹ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 36.

forgive the servant?” He may blessings and peace be upon him answered, “Forgive him seventy times every day.”

It was also narrated, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, “He shall not enter the Garden who is evil in his ownership.” He who is evil in his ownership is he who is evil to his slave. Which mean failing to give the slave sufficient food and clothes, imposing on him such tasks as are beyond his capacity, and insulting or beating him unjustly. These shall all be avenged in the hereafter, as many hadiths state. Should the slave be beaten or insulted for an act that deserves such treatment, it should be done with moderation, never becoming excessive. However, to forgive and pardon is better and more excellent, and deserves a great reward from Allah, August and Majestic is He.

The Rights of Animals

He who owns any animals or cattle should look after them well, treat them with solicitude, and always remain aware of their conditions, whether he does so himself or delegates these tasks to one of his trustworthy children or servants. If he fails to do so, he will have sinned and deserved censure. A hadith narration states that

إِنَّ امْرَأَةً دَخَلَتْ النَّارَ فِي هِرَّةٍ رَبَطَتْهَا لَا هِيَ أَطْعَمَتْهَا وَلَا هِيَ تَرَكَتْهَا تَأْكُلُ مِنْ حَشَاشِ الْأَرْضِ.
“A woman was sent to the Fire because of a cat she had tied, neither feeding it nor allowing it to feed itself freely on what available on earth.”

The Rights of Neighbours

Allah has enjoined us to treat our neighbours well in His, Exalted is He, saying,

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ
وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ.

“Worship Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and treat the parents well, also the kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are relative and neighbours who are strangers.”¹

¹ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 36.

And the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, laid great emphasis on the rights of neighbours, exhorting people to treat them well, strongly forbidding them to offend them.

So much so that he said, may blessings and peace be upon him,

مَا زَالَ جَبْرِيلُ يُوصِينِي بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ سَيُورَثُهُ.

“Angel Gabriel kept recommending the neighbour to me until I thought he was about to allow him to inherit.”

Meaning he was about to grant the neighbour a share in the inheritance of his neighbour. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ جَارَهُ.

“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him honour his neighbour.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ آذَى جَارَهُ فَقَدْ آذَانِي وَمَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ آذَى اللَّهَ.

“Whoever offends his neighbour will have offended me, and he who that offends me would have offended Allah.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

وَاللَّهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ مَنْ لَمْ يَأْمَنْ جَارَهُ بَوَائِقَهُ.

“By Allah! Whose neighbour is not safe from his harm does not believe.”
'Harm' here means evil, injury and exasperating behaviour. And Allah knows best.

The rights of neighbours are immense and treating them well is a religious duty, and this can be achieved only by refraining from offending them, bearing their offences if any, doing them good and treating them as kindly as possible. These are the attributes of believers whose faith is complete. Just as he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَحْسِنْ مُجَاوَرَةً مَنْ جَاوَرَكَ تَكُنْ مُؤْمِنًا.

“Be good to your neighbour, and then you will be a believer.”

The neighbour with most rights upon you is he whose door is nearest to you, then the next, and so on. A hadith narrates that the neighbour who has three rights are the Muslim neighbour who is also a relative, for he has the right of a neighbour, that of a Muslim and a relative. He who has two rights is the Muslim neighbour for he has the right of the neighbour and a Muslim. As for he who has one right is the non-Muslim neighbour.

Observe how the above hadith confirms the rights of neighbourliness for the non-Muslim neighbour despite his disbelief, and you will understand how great the rights of neighbours are and how important in religion. So strive, may Allah have mercy on you, to do good to your neighbours as much as you can, having first refrained from offending them in any way and patiently endured their injuries if any. Seek Allah's help and be patient.

وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ.

“And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, but persons of the greatest good fortune.”¹

Imam al-Ghazali, the Authority on Islam [*Hujjatul Islam*] may Allah have mercy on him recounted in the ‘*Ihya*’ and other works an all-inclusive *hadith* concerning how one should behave toward one's neighbour. He quoted, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, “Do you know what rights a neighbour has? When he asks for your help you should help him, when he asks for a loan you should loan him, when he is poor you should give him, when he is sick, you should visit him, when he dies you should escort his funeral, when something good happens to him you should congratulate him, and when he is stricken with affliction you should console him. You should not elevate your building so high as to obstruct the wind from reaching him save with his permission, neither should you offend him with the vapours of your cooking pot, unless you give him a serving. Whenever you buy fruits, you should offer him some as a gift. If you do not, then bring it inside discreetly and let not your child take it out to spite his. Do you know what

¹ Surah 41 Fussilat Verse 35.

rights a neighbour has? By He in whose hand my soul is, only he upon whom Allah has mercy will be able to fulfil his neighbour's rights."

Our virtuous predecessors used to go to extremes to be good to their neighbours and never offend them. We have been told that once when mice proliferated in the house of one of them, and he was told, "Why do you not buy a cat?" He answered, "I fear lest the mice flee into my neighbours' houses, which is sure to irritate them."

The Rights of Companionship

■ We are enjoined, exhorted and encouraged to treat our companions well. Companions have rights that are important to observe. Allah, Exalted is He, say,

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ
وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ.

"Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, treat the two parents well, as also relatives, orphans, the indigent, the neighbour who is of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion in your vicinity."¹

A narration from whom may the best of blessings and peace be upon him, whereby he said,

مَا مِنْ صَاحِبٍ يَصْحَبُ صَاحِبًا وَلَوْ سَاعَةً مِنْ نَهَارٍ، إِلَّا سُئِلَ عَنْ صُحْبَتِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ:
هَلْ أَقَامَ مِنْهَا حَقَّ اللَّهِ، أَوْ أَضَاعَهُ؟

"Anyone befriend another companion even for part of a day, will be asked to account for his company on Resurrection Day: Did he uphold Allah's rights in that or not?"

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

خَيْرُ الْأَصْحَابِ خَيْرُهُمْ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَخَيْرُ الْجِيرَانِ خَيْرُهُمْ لَجَارِهِ.

"The best of companions are those who behave best toward their companions, and the best of neighbours are those who behave best toward their neighbours."

¹ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 36.

Love Allah and Because of Allah

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا تَحَابَّ اثْنَانِ إِلَّا كَانَ أَحَبُّهُمَا إِلَى اللَّهِ أَشَدَّهُمَا حُبًّا لِصَاحِبِهِ.

“No two shall love one another without the companion that Allah love more is he whose love for his companion is greater.”

The essence of companionship is sincere love and unblemished affection. When this is in Allah, and for Allah, its reward is immense. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: وَجَبَتْ مَحَبَّتِي لِلْمُتَحَابِّينَ فِيَّ، وَالتَّجَالِسِينَ فِيَّ، وَالْمُتَزَاوِرِينَ فِيَّ، وَالْمُتَبَاذِلِينَ فِيَّ.

“Allah, Exalted is He, say, “My love is due to those who love one another for Me, sit with one another for Me and offer gifts to one another for Me.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ: أَيْنَ الْمُتَحَابُّونَ بِجَلَالِي، الْيَوْمَ أَظِلُّهُمْ فِي ظِلِّ إِلَّا ظِلِّي.

“Allah, Exalted is He, shall say on Resurrection Day, “Where are those who loved one another because of My majesty? This day I shall shade them in My shade when there shall be no other shade except My shade.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَجِدَ حَلَاوَةَ الْإِيمَانِ فَلْيُحِبِّ الْمَرْءَ لَا يُحِبُّهُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ.

“He will experience the sweetness of faith who loves a person for no reason other than Allah.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said that seven should be shaded by Allah under His shade on a day when there shall be no other shade... then he mentioned them one after the other until he said, and two men who loved each other because of Allah, they meet and separate because of Allah.

When a person loves another, becomes his friend and companion because of his love of Allah and do deeds in obedience to Him, this is love for Allah the Exalted.

If he loves and befriends him because he helps him uphold his religion and obey his Lord, he loves him for Allah.

If he loves and befriends him because he helps him manage those worldly affairs which are necessary for him in his journey to the hereafter, he loves him for Allah the Exalted.

If he loves and befriends him because he has a personal inclination to him and finds solace in his company, or because he is of assistance to him in his worldly affairs and means of sustenance, this is a personal inclination, unrelated in any manner to love in Allah. It is ego focus friendship based on one's natural disposition. It is permissible and may not be devoid of good Allah the Exalted willing.

However, if he loves and befriends him because he helps him commit sins and injustice and facilitates for him the means to corruption and reprehensible behaviour, then this is an ugly and blameworthy kind of love and friendship. It is in the way of the Devil and has nothing to do with Allah. In the Hereafter, it will turn into enmity if this has not already happened in this life. Allah, Exalted is He says,

الْأَخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ.

“Friends on that day will be foes to one another, except the Righteous.”¹

Befriend the Pious Righteous

O brother, it is incumbent that you should only love and keep company with Allah-fearing people, people of knowledge, and those virtuous servants of Allah who are detached from this world, who are His proteges among believers. For a man shall be with whom he loves in this life and the next, as stated in authentic hadiths just as he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْمَرْءُ مِنْ جَلِيسِهِ، وَالْمَرْءُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ، فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَلِّلُ.

“A man is like whom he sits and a man's religion is that of his intimate friend, so let every man be careful who he becomes intimate with.”

¹ Surah 43 Az Zukhruf Verse 67.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْجَلِيسُ الصَّالِحُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْوَحْدَةِ وَالْوَحْدَةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْجَلِيسِ السُّوءِ.

“Sitting with a virtuous companion is better than solitude, but solitude is better than sitting with an evil companion.”

Keeping company with Allah-fearing and virtuous people draws one nearer to Allah, and this is the praiseworthy, benevolent companionship, as is stated in so many Prophetic and other traditions. It is love for Allah and in Allah, the rewards of which are immense, and the importance in religion and rank of which are high.

On the other hand, the company of evil people and those whose company brings nothing good, such as the heedless who are distracted away from Allah and the Last Abode, is a blameworthy detestable company, for evil and corrupt people should be detested in Allah and it is incumbent to avoid and stay away from them, and this is one of the important matters in religion. He who loves in and for Allah, those of Allah’s servants who are righteous and Allah-fearing must necessarily detest those who rebel against Him and turn away from His obedience. For love in Allah and detestation in Allah go together, neither can be sound without the other, and both rank high in religion. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مِنْ أَوْثَقِ عُرَى الْإِيمَانِ الْحُبُّ فِي اللَّهِ وَالْبُغْضُ فِي اللَّهِ.

“Among the strongest ties of faith is to love in Allah and detest in Allah.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَفْضَلُ الْأَعْمَالِ الْحُبُّ فِي اللَّهِ وَالْبُغْضُ فِي اللَّهِ.

“The best of good deeds is to love in Allah and detest in Allah.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

وَهَلِ الدِّينُ إِلَّا الْحُبُّ فِي اللَّهِ وَالْبُغْضُ فِي اللَّهِ.

“Religion is nothing but to love in Allah and detest in Allah.”

Allah revealed to Isa (Jesus) may peace be upon him, “Were you to worship Me as much as all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth,

but without loving for My sake and detesting for My sake, it would avail nothing to you with Me. Jesus himself, may peace be upon him said, “Seek Allah’s love by detesting those who commit sins. Draw nearer to Allah by keeping away from them. And seek Allah’s good pleasure in their displeasure.”

Al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “Boycotting the corrupt brings you nearer to Allah.”

It is clear from what we recounted above that it is incumbent upon the believer to love the people of goodness, religion, knowledge, and virtue, both the living and the dead. Similarly, one should o detest the people of falsehood, corruption, iniquity, and transgression, both the living and the dead.

It is incumbent to should choose for companions the virtuous and righteous and avoid the evil and the corrupt. In a hadith narration stated, لَا تَصْحَبْ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنًا، وَلَا يَأْكُلْ طَعَامَكَ إِلَّا تَقِيٌّ.

“Do not keep company except that of a believer, nor let anyone eat your food but an Allah-fearing person.”

He who is unable to find an Allah-fearing, virtuous, benevolent believer to keep company with, then seclusion and solitude are better and nearer rectitude than to mix with evil, corrupt people. Associating with corrupt people is of immense harm and tremendous evil. It is fraught with perils and difficult trials, both immediate and future. Among these are acquiring their attributes unaware, watching them and so coming to find comfort in their presence, inclining toward their evil states, easing the impact of sins on the heart, being led to imitating them and approving of their words and deeds. The poet said,

Ask not about a man, but his companions,

For he is bound to imitate his companions.

Another said,

A person with scabies is not cured by proximity to the healthy,

But it is healthy that get contagious with scabies.

Now you know how the company of superior, virtuous people is full of benefits and both immediate and long-term profits.

He said, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, "The good companion is like the musk vendor. Either he gives you of it, or you may purchase some, or you will smell from him a fragrant smell. But the evil companion is like the bellows blower. Either he burns your clothes, or you smell from him a foul smell.

You may ask, "Should one befriend a good person given obedience who then shifts behaviour and becomes one who is distracted and sinful, what should one do then?"

In my opinion, "You should counsel him compassionately and gently and try to make him return to Allah. If he does not respond, you should admonish him harshly and try to put the fear of Allah into him. If this gives no result, stay away from him and wait for Allah's decision. Should he revert to his previous good state, you can resume your friendship; if not, there is no good in befriending a person in which there is no good."

If you ask, "One is obliged to detest sinners, avoid them, and abandon befriending and mixing with them, but is one also not obliged to counsel the Muslims in general and to summon those people who are evil and sinful to good and obedience?"

In my opinion, "It is so. But counselling and inviting to goodness does not necessitate keeping their company and mixing with them. It may take place when you meet them and feel that they would be willing to accept counselling and inviting them to goodness. Also, if you are qualified you may go to them wherever you know you are likely to find them without becoming their companion or mixing with them much, and this is commendable and required of those who are qualified. You should know this and let not the Devil confound you, for the road is clear and right is distinct from wrong."

Choosing a Good Companion

You should know now that when you wish to befriend someone so that he may be your companion, that you may find comfort in his

company, and that he may be of assistance to you in both your worldly and religious affairs, you should choose carefully beforehand, test him, and inquire about his behaviour. If he turns out to be suitable, so be it. If not, you should not proceed, for not everyone is suitable to become a friend and companion. Such companionship that is not preceded by deliberate choice often quickly turns into enmity and estrangement.

The Proof of Islam, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “Whenever you wish to befriend someone, look for five things in him, intelligence, good character, virtue, some degree of detachment from worldly things, and that he is not a liar.” This is comprehensive and sufficient.

When friendship comes into being and affection is born between yourself and the companion, certain rights become incumbent upon you without the fulfilment of which this friendship will remain an image without reality, devoid of benefit or useless.

Rights of Companionship

The rights of companionship are many. Some of which are:

- to wish for your companion the same good, you desire for yourself and dislike to see him subjected to any evil you would have disliked for yourself,
- to attribute the same importance to his affairs as to yours, strive to serve his interests and fulfil his needs, feel happy when his situation is satisfactory and anxious when it is not,
- to try to bring him happiness in any way you can,
- to preserve his interests whether he is present or absent, during his lifetime and after he dies,
- to look after his wife, children and relatives during his life and after his death,
- to help him with your money whenever he needs help. If you can bring yourself to give him preference over yourself, it would be better and more excellent.

This is how the virtuous predecessors behaved, may Allah have mercy on them, and their behaviour toward their companions was praiseworthy as is well known. They would enter their friends' houses in their absence, eat of their food, and take whatever they needed. Their friends did the same with them. One of them was asked, "Do you have more love for your brother or your friend?" He answered, "I love my brother when he is my friend." Another asked a man he was visiting, "Does one of you put his hand into his brother's pocket and take whatever he needs?" He said, "No." He said, "Then you are not brothers." Whenever one of them died, his companion would take such complete care of his wife and children that the only thing the children missed was to see their father's face. Numerous well-known stories have been handed down concerning this. However, this is something that we lost a long time ago so that nothing remains of brotherhood in Allah and friendship save appearances and formalities that are of no use. The Imam, the Proof of Islam has written comprehensively on the conditions of companionship, its rights and courtesies, in the Book of Companionship in the "*Ihya*" and has discoursed on it briefly yet usefully in "*Bidayatul Hidaya*".

On the whole, every behaviour that is either obligatory or recommended toward Muslims, in general, becomes more incumbent and recommended toward friends and companions.

The Rights of Muslims in General

Every Muslim has numerous rights over other Muslims. Some of which we mentioned in the "Book of Assistance" [*Risalatul Muawanah*], so you may look them up there if you wish. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

حَقُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ سِتٌّ: وَمَا هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: إِذَا لَقَيْتَهُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا دَعَاكَ فَأَجِبْهُ، وَإِذَا اسْتَنْصَحَكَ فَانْصَحْهُ، وَإِذَا عَطَسَ فَحَمِدَ اللَّهَ فَسَمِّتْهُ، وَإِذَا مَرِضَ فَعُدَّهُ، وَإِذَا مَاتَ فَاتَّبِعْهُ.

"The rights of one Muslim on another are six." They asked, "What are they, O Messenger of Allah?" He answered, "Whenever you meet him,

greet him with the *salam*, whenever he calls you, answer him, whenever he asks you for counsel, counsel him, whenever he sneezes, bless him, whenever he is ill, visit him, and whenever he dies, escort his funeral.”

Among the most incumbent rights of one Muslim over another are to counsel him in religious matters, assist him in acts of benevolence and Allah-fearing and exhort him to obey Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Other important rights are

- to conceal what would shame him,
- to relieve his distress,
- to assist him whenever he needs assistance,
- to fulfil his needs,
- to save him if he is in peril,
- to support if he is oppressed,
- to help if he is weak,
- to grant respite to if he is in difficulty,
- to respect if he is elderly,
- to show compassion to the young or small,
- to avoid causing harm to any Muslim, treating him disdainfully or despising him and look down on him,
- to deriding or mocking him.
- not to cheat a Muslim,
- not to resent, harbour rancour or think ill of him.
- you must be concerned with the situation of Muslims in general,
- you should feel happy when something good happens to them and aggrieved when something evil befalls them, desire for them all what you desire for yourself and dislike for them what you dislike for yourself.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ.

“None of you is a believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْمُسْلِمُ لِلْمُسْلِمِ كَالْبُنْيَانِ يَشُدُّ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا.

“A believer is to other believers are like structures each part of which supports the others.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ لَمْ يَهْتَمَّ بِأَمْرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَلَيْسَ مِنْهُمْ.

“He who is unconcerned with the affairs of the Muslims is not of them.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَيُوَقِّرْ كَبِيرَنَا.

“He is not one of us who has no compassion for our young and no respect for our elders.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“He who cheats us is not of us.” مَنْ غَشَّنَا فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

انصُرْ أَخَاكَ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا، فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: نَنْصُرُهُ إِذَا كَانَ مَظْلُومًا فَكَيْفَ نَنْصُرُهُ ظَالِمًا؟
قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَمْنَعُهُ مِنَ الظَّلْمِشِ فَذَلِكَ نُصْرَةٌ لَهُ.

“Support your brother, whether he is wrong or being wronged.” A companion asked, “When we know he is wrong to support him, but how do we support him when he is the one committing the wrong?” He may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, answered, “If you prevent him from wronging others, you will have supported him.”

And he said may, Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

لَا تَحَاسَدُوا، وَلَا تَنَاجَشُوا، وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا، وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا، وَلَا يَبِعْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَيْعِ بَعْضٍ،
وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا، الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ: لَا يَظْلِمُهُ، وَلَا يَخْذُلُهُ، وَلَا يَحْقِرُهُ، وَلَا يُكْذِبُهُ
التَّقْوَى هَاهُنَا وَيُشِيرُ بِيَدِهِ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ، بِحَسْبِ امْرِئٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ
الْمُسْلِمَ، كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ حَرَامٌ: دَمُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعِرْضُهُ.

“Resent not one another, bid not higher to deceive one another, detest not one another, turn not your backs on one another, try not to outbid one another in commerce, and O servants of Allah, be brothers! The Muslim is a brother to the Muslim; he does not wrong him, nor let him down, nor despise him, nor lie to him. Piety is here. (At this he pointed his noble hand at his chest three times.) It is sufficient evil for a man to despise his Muslim brother. Forbidden to every Muslim is the blood, property and his honour of another Muslim.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ نَفَسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ الدُّنْيَا، نَفَسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ، يَسِّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ. . .

“Whoever relieves a believer’s distress in this world, Allah shall relieve his distress on Resurrection Day. Whoever grants a person in difficulty respite, Allah shall ease his difficulties in this life and the next. Whoever shields a Muslim from shame, Allah shall shield him from shame in this life and the next. Allah will always assist the servant so long as the servant is assisting his brother.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ.

“Whoever is striving to fulfil his brother’s need, Allah shall fulfil his.”

﴿وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ﴾

For Allah says the truth

﴿وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ﴾

And He guides to the path.

Chapter Thirteen

Actions and Deeds that Ruin

Lawful [*Halal*] and Unlawful [*Haram*]

O brothers you should know, may Allah suffice us with what is lawful [*Halal*] and not needing the unlawful [*haram*], grants us His obedience and not disobedience, His favour and not from other than Him. That one of the most important religious duties and best ways a servant may seek to draw nearer to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, is carefully to keep away from the unlawful [*haram*] and the doubtful [*syubhat*] and seek the lawful and expend of it. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ.

“O people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one, for he is to you a manifest enemy.”¹

And the Exalted says, وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ.

“Eat of what Allah have provided for you, lawful and good; but fear and be mindful of your duties to Allah, in Whom you believe.”²

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا. وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُدُوًّا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصْلِيهِ نَارًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا.

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 168.

² Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 88.

“O you who believe! Eat not your property among yourselves in vanities: But let there be amongst you exchange and trade by mutual good-will: Nor kill or destroy one another: for verily Allah has been to you Most Merciful! If any do that in rancour and injustice, soon shall We cast them into the Fire: And easy it is for Allah.”¹

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said, وَحَيْرُ دِينِكُمُ الْوَرَعُ

“The best of your religious practices are piousness [*wara*].

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، كُنْ وَرِعًا تَكُنْ أَعْبَدَ النَّاسِ .

“O Abu Hurairah! Be pious, and you will be the best of worshippers.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

طَلَبُ الْحَالَالِ وَاجِبٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ.

“Seeking lawful provision is incumbent upon every Muslim.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

طَلَبُ الْحَالَالِ فَرِيضَةٌ بَعْدَ الْفَرِيضَةِ.

“Seeking lawful provision is an obligation to every Muslim in addition to his other obligations.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ طَيِّبٌ لَا يَقْبَلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَمَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِمَا أَمَرَ بِهِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ؛ فَقَالَ تَعَالَى: يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا. وَقَالَ تَعَالَى: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ. ثُمَّ ذَكَرَ الرَّجُلَ أَشْعَثَ أَغْبَرَ يُطِيلُ السَّفَرَ يُمِدُّ يَدَيْهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ: يَا رَبُّ، يَا رَبُّ! وَمَطْعَمُهُ حَرَامٌ، وَمَشْرَبُهُ حَرَامٌ، وَمَلْبَسُهُ حَرَامٌ، وَعُدْيَتُهُ بِالْحَرَامِ، فَأَنَّى يُسْتَجَابُ لِذَلِكَ؟

“Allah is good, and He does not accept from His servants anything except that is good; and indeed, Allah has enjoined upon the believers what He had enjoined upon the Messengers, He, the Exalted said, “O Messengers! Eat of what is good and do good deeds, I know well what you do.”² And

¹ Surah 4 An Nisaa Verse 29-30.

² Surah 23 Al Mukminum Verse 51.

He the Exalted said, “O believers! Eat of the good things from what We have provided you.”¹ Then the Prophet mentioned of a man unkempt, dusty, travelling long distances, raising his hands to heaven, “O Lord! O Lord!” but his food is unlawful, his beverage unlawful, his clothes unlawful, and he had been sustaining himself on the unlawful, how can such a one possibly be answered?”

And he said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ لَحْمٌ نَبَتَ مِنْ سُحْتٍ.

“He shall not enter the Garden whose flesh grown on the unlawful.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

كُلُّ لَحْمٍ نَبَتَ مِنْ سُحْتٍ فَالنَّارُ أَوْلَى بِهِ.

“Every flesh that grows from the unlawful, the Fire is more worthy of it.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَأَنْ تَجْعَلَ فِي فَمِكَ تُرَابًا خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنْ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ فِيهِ طَعَامًا حَرَامًا.

“For you to fill your mouth with earth is better for you than to put into it unlawful [*haram*] food.”

And he said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

مَنْ اِكْتَسَبَ مَالًا مِنْ حِلِّهِ فَإِنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ لَمْ يُقْبَلْ مِنْهُ، وَإِنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْهُ لَمْ يُبَارَكْ لَهُ فِيهِ، وَإِنْ تَرَكَهُ خَلْفَ ظَهْرِهِ كَانَ زَادَهُ إِلَى النَّارِ.

“When a person acquires money from an unlawful source, then if he donates it to charity, it is not accepted from him. If he spends it, it will never be blessed. If he leaves it behind, it will be his provision (on his journey) to the Fire?”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ اشْتَرَى ثَوْبًا بِعَشْرَةِ دَرَاهِمَ وَفِيهِ دَرَاهِمٌ مِنْ حَرَامٍ لَمْ يَقْبَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ صَلَاةً مَا دَامَ عَلَيْهِ.

“Whoever buys a garment for ten dirhams, of which one dirham is unlawful, Allah shall not accept his ritual prayer so long as he wears it.”

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 172.

If this is what happens when one-tenth of the price of the garment is unlawful, how will it be if the full price was so? And if this is what happens with a garment on the outside of the body, what about the food which enters the body and flows into the flesh, blood, veins, bones and all the rest of the body? Reflect upon this with deliberation, fear Allah, and beware.

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said, “Allah does not accept the ritual prayer of a man inside whom is one unlawful morsel of food.”

And Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said, “Were you to keep praying until you become (bent) like a bow, and fast until you become (thin) like a bowstring, none of this will be accepted in the absence of protective piousness.”

It is said that the Torah states, “He who cares little where his food comes from, Allah cares little from which of the doors of the Fire He shall admit him.”

And Sufyān al-Thawri, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “He who expends unlawful gains in acts of obedience is as he who washes his polluted clothes with urine.” The clothes will never be purified in that manner, but only increase in impurity.

And ibn al-Mubarak, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him, said, “To refuse a single doubtful [*syubhat*] Dirham is more pleasing to Allah than to give a hundred thousand Dirhams in charity, then a hundred thousand, then a hundred thousand. He repeated it until they reached six hundred thousand.

And Sahl ibn Abdallah al-Tustari, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “He who eats unlawful food, his limbs will disobey, whether he likes it or not and whether he knows it or not, but he who eats lawful food, his limbs will obey, whether he likes or not and whether he knows it or not, and he is granted success in good works,” Our predecessors used to say, “Eat what you wish, so will you act.”

In my opinion, even if a person eats from unlawful or suspect sources seems outwardly to be performing acts of obedience, they are never accepted, for He Exalted is He, say,

“Allah only accepts from the Allah-fearing.”¹ **إِنَّمَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ.**

And the Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ طَيِّبٌ لَا يَقْبَلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا.

“Indeed, Allah is good, and He only accepts what is good.”

Inevitably he whose earnings are unlawful will be afflicted by outward and inward imperfections that will blemish his acts of obedience or even annul them. Whoever reflects on this and observes it in himself and others will recognise the truth of it, unless his inner desire and lured by profits deceived he.

It has now become clear and evident that one should avoid the unlawful [haram] then utmost guard oneself against it and keep away from it in all its form.

The Suspect [*Syubhat*]

As for the suspect [*syubhat*], it is important to avoid it, and it may even become obligatory. Part of an authentic hadith stated,

مَنِ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ فَقَدْ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ، وَعِرْضِهِ، وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي الْحَرَامِ.

“He who guards himself against suspect things has protected his religion and honour, and he who falls into the suspect will fall into the unlawful.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

دَعْ مَا يُرِيبُكَ إِلَى مَا لَا يُرِيبُكَ.

“Leave that which arouses your suspicion for that which does not.”

The ‘suspect’ matters are those matters or issues that you have doubts and are undecided, whether they are lawful or unlawful. These doubts arise from contradictions in the situation. That which is originally

¹ Surah 5 A Maidah Verse 27.

lawful, when doubts arise as to whether it still is or not, it is permissible to use it, because at its origin it was lawful. However, avoiding it because it is suspect is eminently virtuous. As for those which is originally unlawful, when doubts arise as to whether it has become lawful, it should be avoided because at the origin it was unlawful.

Suspect matters are of many kinds and degrees. Piousness is strongly recommended here and consists of avoiding all of them. However, sometimes suspicions are due to obsessive [*waswas*] or illusory thinking [*awham*]. For example, one might say, “All kinds of wealth in this world are suspect, they are never free from invalid transactions at the origin and unjust handling later on, therefore I shall avoid them altogether.” Or “I shall accept whatever I need of them indiscriminately.” These are nothing but obsessions and extremism. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

هَلَكَ الْمُتَنَطِّعُونَ!! (قَالَ ثَلَاثًا). “Extremists shall perish!! (three times).”

There are many kinds of obsessive doubts, and they are all due to suspiciousness and illusory issue that have no concrete basis in reality. It is incumbent that a person should not say, “There is nothing lawful left in this world.” intending thereby to justify his abandoning piousness and caution. This statement is false. Imam al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, quote he, may blessings and peace be upon him who said,

إِنَّ الْحَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ، وَالْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ. “The lawful is clear, and the unlawful is clear.”

“This referred to his time, may blessings and peace be upon him, but also to all other times. The difference between one era and another is but the scarcity or abundance of the lawful, according to whether the period is good or corrupt.” He goes on to say, “The lawful is abundant, and so is the unlawful. The latter is not more abundant. In every era the three kinds must exist, the lawful [*halal*], the unlawful [*haram*] and the suspect [*syubhat*], as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, stated when he said, “The lawful is clear, etc.”

You should now know, may Allah have mercy on you, that we have drawn attention to suspect things in brief general terms, but they were discussed at length and in detail by the Imam Al Ghazali Proof of

Islam in the Book of the Lawful and the Unlawful in the *Ihya Ulumiddin*. Thus whoever wishes to satisfy himself more fully concerning these issues is advised to refer to that book. Once one of the scholars, may Allah have mercy on them, states that no other book was ever written in Islam that is equal to this book.

In my opinion, the whole of the *Ihya* is unique, and this becomes evident to any person of knowledge and fair judgment that cares to read and reflect upon it.

The Unlawful [*Haram*]

You should know, may Allah have mercy on you, that unlawful things are of two kinds.

Firstly, that which is unlawful in itself such as carcass, blood, alcoholic beverages, some birds, predators, animals, and insects that are forbidden for consumption. These can never be lawful except in extreme necessity, like on the verge of death with nothing to consume. Only then does it become permissible. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخَنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْفُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ذَلِكُمْ يَسْقُ الْيَوْمَ يَيسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنَ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

“Forbidden to you are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which have been invoked the name of other than Allah; killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which have been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless you are able to slaughter it; that which is sacrificed on altars; also is the division of meat by raffling with arrows: that is impiety. This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: Do not fear them but fear Me! This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed

My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But if any is forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”¹

And the Exalted says,

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

“Indeed, He has forbidden upon you dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine and that which has been consecrated to other than Allah. But if one is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then he is not guilty. For Allah is Oft-forgiving Most Merciful.”²

The second category of *haram*: Things which are lawful in their selves but owned by another. Things owned by another are unlawful to you save through a legally valid transaction such as buying, vows, gifts, donations, charity, inheritance, and so on. Were you to acquire one of these things other than in a legal manner, it becomes forbidden to you, and if you use it to buy food, beverage or clothes, these will also be unlawful to you,

There are many forbidden manners of acquiring things, for instance, coercion, theft, betrayal, usury, and so on.

Also, if the wealth or possession of the person is unlawful and you are dealing with or taking from him, it will not profit you to take from him, even though it is a legally valid transaction. For example, when a person, about whom you know that most of his wealth or something of that particular portion of his wealth that concerns you is unlawful, gives you something as a gift or sells it to you by a valid transaction, these lawful transactions will not render the unlawful lawful, and this may cause problems for people lacking insight.

It is now clear that a valid transaction does not change something originally unlawful into something lawful.

¹ Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 3.

² Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 173.

On the other hand, an invalid transaction will cause the lawful to become unlawful. For instance, lawful capital may yield unlawful money through an invalid transaction such as usury or something similar.

You should now know, may Allah have mercy on you, that as concerns worldly transactions, people are of three kinds.

The first is those who are known to be virtuous, good and pious. It is unconditionally permissible to deal with them without prior inquiry or investigating.

The second is those who are unknown to you so that you know nothing of their virtue or otherwise. It is unconditionally permissible to deal with them, but it is better to inquire and investigate whenever possible, and this is commendable piousness but should be done with tact and without offending.

The third is those who are known to be inconsistent, lack piousness and are reckless in their buying, selling and other transactions. An Allah-fearing person should avoid dealing with them altogether. Should he be ever forced to, it becomes incumbent upon him to enquire about what he is about to take from them and investigate its source, and this is necessary piousness. Should he come to know for certain or believe strongly that a person's wealth is all unlawful, it becomes forbidden to deal with him. The same will apply should he come to know that most of his wealth is unlawful and that whatever is there that is lawful is scarce and rare.

Once Ibn al-Mubarak, may Allah have mercy on him, was asked about whether one may deal with a man who deals with the ruler. He answered, "If his dealings are exclusive with the ruler, do not deal with him; but if he deals with others as well, you may deal with him."

Contentment [*Qanaah*] Verse Excessive [*Israf*]

In my opinion, "He who wishes to be pious, cautious and use nothing unlawful, let him be content with little of this world and not wish for more. Let him avoid extravagance, lavish spending and excessive desire for pleasures." The virtuous predecessors used to say, "The lawful

does not bear excess.” He who is excessive in seeking the pleasures of this world will inevitably need to use means which cannot be used without indulging in suspect or even forbidden things, and this is well known by anyone who has tried it, is of good counsel to himself, and judges fairly, but not to the self-deceived fools and unintelligent ignorant people who deliberately wade into suspect and unlawful things, while pretending to be careful and to accept nothing but what is lawful, then following this with feeble arguments and far-fetched explanations to justify their behaviour.

The Pious Path of the Virtuous Predecessors

Allah-fearing and piousness are incumbent and inescapable. Should there be shortcomings, then the least one can do is to be fair and concede that it has happened, then remain humble and ask for forgiveness. One of the virtuous predecessors, may Allah have mercy on them, was asked, “Where do you eat from?” He answered, “From the same place that you do, but he who weeps as he eats is not as he who laughs.” And Allah, Transcendent is He, knows best.

It is now clear that piousness is the pivot of religion, the way of the believers who are resolute people of certainty. The virtuous predecessors, may Allah have mercy on them, were extremely careful to be pious and meticulously so. Their stories illustrating this are well known, and their pattern of behaviour well recorded and familiar to all.

It was narrated to us that ibn Sirin, may Allah have mercy on him, once bought numerous large jars of cooking oil for a large sum of money. In one of them, he found a dead mouse. So he throws away all the oil, saying, “I fear that the mouse may have died in the oil press and contaminated all the oil.”

Then there was Sufyan al-Thawri, may Allah have mercy on him, when he failed to find purely lawful provision, he ate sand for days.

Once Ibn al-Mubarak returned from Merv in Khorasan to Syria because he had borrowed a pen and forgotten to return it.

And Ibrahim ibn Adham, may Allah have mercy on him, returned from Jerusalem to Basra to return a single date that had fallen among his as they were being weighed and that he had forgotten to return at the time.

When Dhul Nuun al-Misri, may Allah have mercy on him, was jailed, a virtuous woman sent him some lawful food which she had bought with the price of her spinning. He sent it back saying the food had come to him served by the hand of an oppressive person, meaning the jailer.

One of them attended a patient at his death bed [*naza*] on a certain night. When the sick person died, he said, “Put out the lamp, for now, it has become the property of his heirs.”

Another said, “Once I was travelling then lost my way and became extremely thirsty. A soldier who crossed my path gave me some water to drink, which caused some hardness to affect my heart for thirty years.”

There are many more such stories. The few that we have quoted were for the blessings [*baraka*] of remembering them, for mercy descends when the virtuous are mentioned. But he who is possessed of insight should recognise the difference between the predecessors and the latecomers, understand in what kind of time he lives, and who are the people to whom he belongs and among whom he lives.

Halal Illuminates Haram Darken the Heart

You should now know, may Allah have mercy on you, that consuming what is lawful illuminates and softens the heart, instils into it the fear of Allah and humility before His majesty, activates the bodily members in acts of worship and obedience, causes detachment from this world and desire for the hereafter, and is the means by which one’s good deeds are accepted and prayers answered.

Just as he may blessings and peace be upon him, said to Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him, **أَطْبَ طُعْمَتَكَ تُسْتَجَبَ دَعْوَتَكَ**. “Eat pure food and your prayers shall be answered.”

As for consuming the unlawful and the suspect, they cause the opposite of these good effects. They harden and darken the heart, prevent the bodily members from obedience, instil desire for this world, and cause good deeds to be rejected and prayers to remain unanswered, as in the hadith where the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, mentions a man who is unkempt and dusty, who raises his hands toward heaven, "O Lord! O Lord!" But his food is unlawful, etc. . . We have already quoted the hadith in full. Be extremely careful about consuming what is lawful only and avoid the unlawful. Piousness involves not only food but everything else as well.

Seek only Lawful Earnings

You must make your earnings lawful, for it is incumbent upon a person to earn his living and there are merit and abundant reward in doing so when the intention is good. The Prophet said, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him,

أَطْيَبُ مَا أَكَلَ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ كَسْبٍ يَمِينِهِ.

"The best that a man may eat is that which is his own earning."

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ أَمْسَى كَالاً مِنْ عَمَلِ الْحَلَالِ أَمْسَى مَغْفُوراً لَهُ.

"Whoever is tired out after a full day of work, he will be forgiven."

So let a person whose intention of protecting his religion, work to save himself from the embarrassment of depending on others, sufficing himself and his dependents, and giving the surplus away as charity to the needy among the servants of Allah the Exalted. He would thus be working for the hereafter.

Important Reminder

Let him beware to the extreme of becoming so occupied with earning that he neglects Allah's obligations or falls into what Allah has forbidden. He would thus lose both this world and the next. There is no clearer evidence of failure. One of our virtuous predecessors, may Allah, the Exalted, have mercy on them, said, "There are three kinds of men!

- One who is too occupied with the hereafter to attend to this world, he is one of the successful;
- Another who is occupy with this world, but only for the sake of the hereafter, he is one of the lukewarm;
- A third who is too occupied with this world to attend to the hereafter, he is unjust to himself, or he might have said, “one of those who will perish.”

Responsibility of a Worker

If you earn his living from a professional craftsman or a skilled worker, you must deal honestly with all Muslims and do your job with as much precision and excellence as you can. A narration stated:

“Allah loves the believer, who is a craftsman.” إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُؤْمِنَ الْمُحَرِّفَ.

You should beware of lying or cheating, of breaking your promises, saying, “Tomorrow,” or “the day after tomorrow.” You should beware to the extreme of neglecting to achieve excellence when dealing with someone unlikely to recognise the faults in your work or of using his unfamiliar with your craft to deceive him. It has been transmitted,

“Woe to the merchant who swears by, “No by Allah!” and “Yes, by Allah!” And woe to the craftsman who swears, “Tomorrow”, and “the day after tomorrow!”

Responsibility in Trading

If you are a merchant, strive in all your dealings to avoid invalid transactions and the kind of contracts that are either forbidden or discouraged. Learn about these things and understand them. There is no way out for you from this and absolutely no permission to neglect it. Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Whoever has not studied should neither sell nor buy in our market because he may deal in usury unaware.” What he said is true, may Allah be pleased with him.

You must always be fair and generous in your commerce, choose to be indulgent and lenient, rather than rigorous and demanding, and this

is more likely to increase the blessings [*baraka*] and accrue your gains. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا: سَمَحًا إِذَا بَاعَ، سَمَحًا إِذَا اشْتَرَى، سَمَحًا إِذَا اقْتَضَى.

“May Allah have mercy on a servant who is indulgent when he sells, indulgent when he buys, and tolerant when he requests his money.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَفْضَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ: رَجُلٌ سَمَحًا إِذَا بَاعَ، سَمَحًا إِذَا اشْتَرَى، سَمَحًا إِذَا اقْتَضَى.

“The best of believers are those who are tolerant when he sells and buys, tolerant when he requests his money and when he settles his dealings.”

Never buy or sell anything without valid formulas of offer and acceptance, for simply handing over something is insufficient to complete the transaction, although some have permitted it in the case of insignificant items, and although (Imam Ghazali) the Proof of Islam seemed inclined to accept it when discussing at length in the *Ihya* how to effect exchanges. Nevertheless, buying and selling using explicit agreements is always better and more cautious.

Do not Swear and Lie in Trading

You must refrain from lying altogether, Never say, “I have bought it for so much”, “I have given for it so much”, “I will not sell it for less than so much” when you are untrue, then you will lose even as you hope to gain. Never swear by Allah’s name when selling or buying, do not make it a habit because the worldly gain is insignificant and vile than to deserve a truthful oath, how much more so when you lie!

There is no need for oaths or swearing in trading. A hadith stated,
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبْغِضُ الْبَيَّاعَ الْخَلَّافَ.

“Allah detests the merchant who constantly swears.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,

الْيَمِينُ مَنْفَقَةٌ لِلسِّلْعَةِ، مَمْحَقَةٌ لِلْبَرَكَةِ وَالْكَسْبِ.

“Oaths may sell the merchandise but destroy the blessings or profit.”

He also said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

التُّجَّارُ يُحْشَرُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَجَارًّا إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّقَى وَبَرَ وَصَدَقَ.

“Merchants will be led to the gathering on Resurrection Day as corrupt people, except those who have been Allah-fearing, loyal, and truthful.”

Cheating Deception Fraud

You should beware to the extreme of cheating, deception, fraud and hiding the faults in what you are selling, for these are severely forbidden and may render transactions altogether invalid. When he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, passed by a man who was selling foodstuff and passing his hand through, felt some of it be damp, he said, “O owner of the food, what is this?” The man answered, “Rain came down on it.” He said, “Will you not place it on top where people can see it? He who cheats us is not of us.”

In another version, he is said to have observed some low quality food among the rest. He said, “Will you not separate them and sell them each separately? He who cheats the Muslims is not of us.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
الْبَيْعَانِ بِالْخِيَارِ مَا لَمْ يَتَفَرَّقَا، فَإِنْ صَدَقَا وَبَيَّنَّا بُورِكَ لَهُمَا فِي بَيْعِهِمَا، وَإِنْ كَذَبَا وَكُتِمَا
مُحِقَّتْ بَرَكَتُهُ بَيْعُهُمَا.

“The two parties retain their freedom of decision until they part company. If they are true and clear, their transaction will be blessed. But if they lie and conceal, the blessings in their transaction will be removed.”

None is allowed to sell faulty merchandise without pointing out the faults in it. If the person conceals them and someone else present knows about them, the latter is obliged to point them out, as stated in the hadith, for being of good counsel is an obligation. Another kind of forbidden cheating is to mix good with bad merchandise, then sell them together to deceive the buyer.

Another is to slip a bad dirham among the good ones, which thing is not permissible. If given in this manner to someone likely to give it to another Muslim in the course of another transaction, it is forbidden. There

is no way to dispose of bad coins that do not resemble those in use in the land but to throw them down a well or any other such place, as certain virtuous predecessors used to do, or else take them to the silversmith who is able to extract whatever silver they contain, make it into good coins, and use the copper or any other metal that had been introduced into them in whatever useful manner is possible. He whose ego will not consent to this should be careful never to accept bad illegal Dirhams. Should one fall into his hand and his ego does not permit him to destroy it, he should return it forthwith to the person he has taken it from if known to him, but should never give it to another Muslim, for this would be sinful.

Weight and Measure

Let the merchant fear Allah in all his affairs, especially in weights and measures, for their peril is great. Allah, Exalted is He, say,
وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ. وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ.
“Wail¹ to those that deal in fraud, who when they want to receive from people demand exact full measure. But when they have to give people by measure or weight give less than due.”²

He may blessings and peace be upon him, told the merchants,
إِنَّكُمْ وَلَيْتُمْ أَمْراً هَلَكْتُمْ فِيهِ الْأُمَمُ السَّابِقَةُ الْمِكْيَالُ وَالْمِيزَانُ. . .
“You have been given charge of something that has caused previous communities to perish: “weights and measures”.”

Therefore, a merchant must be fair, which means that he must give in the same manner that he takes and remain careful and cautious. It is better and more cautious for him to give a little more than he should when he gives and take a little less than he should when taking. One of our virtuous predecessors used to do this, saying, “I am not one to buy ‘Wail!’ from Allah for a grain.” Meaning by ‘Wail!’ that in the Exalted saying “Wail to the fraudulent!” and by grain meaning a little money.

¹ The lowest level of Hell is *Wail*.

² Surah 83 Al Mutaffifin Verses 1-3.

Manners in Trading

Among the virtues of merchants are to accept to annul his bargain with he who has changed his mind, grant respite to those unable to settle what they owe him, deal indulgently with the rest, loan those who need a loan and fulfil the needs of those in need. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said, مَنْ أَقَالَ نَادِمًا يَبْعَثُهُ أَقَالَ اللَّهُ عَثْرَتَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Whoever annul his contract with a person who is regretting it, Allah shall annul reckoning all his previous stumbling on Resurrection Day.”

An authentic hadith stated, “A man came before Allah, who had never done any good deeds but used to loan people and directed his servant, “Collect the easy repayment and leave those who are in difficulty. Be indulgent that perhaps Allah shall treat us indulgently.” When Allah, August and Majestic, asked him, “Have you ever done any good deeds at all?” He answered, “No, but I used to loan people, and whenever my servant went to collect I direct him to take what repayment easily and leave those who are in difficulty, and be indulgent that perhaps Allah shall treat us indulgently,” Allah, Exalted is He, said to him, We are the best to indulge than you and shall treat you indulgently.”

He said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, “Every loan is a charity.” كُلُّ قَرْضٍ صَدَقَةٌ.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said, رَأَيْتُ لَيْلَةً أُسْرِي بِي عَلَى بَابِ الْجَنَّةِ: الصَّدَقَةُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا وَالْقَرْضُ بِثَمَانِيَةِ عَشَرَ. . .

“I saw written on the gate of Heaven on the night I was made to journey. A Charity reward ten times, but a loan multiplied eighteen times.”

Forbidden Transactions

Let the merchant beware to the extreme of outbidding his brother, who has just concluded a purchasing or selling transaction, and this means that before the two parties separate, he says to the buyer, “I have cheaper than this to offer you.” Or to the seller, “I shall give you more for this.” Both are forbidden. Just like to bid higher with no intention to buy, but to raise the price to deceive other Muslims.

Let him also beware of monopolising food, for it is strictly forbidden. Several hadiths rigorously forbid this, such as his saying, may blessings and peace be upon him,

مَنْ اخْتَكَرَ طَعَامًا اَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً فَقَدْ بَرِئَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَبَرِئَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ. . .

“He who monopolises one kind of food for forty nights, he has disavowed Allah, and Allah shall disavow him.”

And may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْجَالِبُ مُرْزُوقٌ، وَالْمُخْتَكِرُ مَلْعُونٌ.

“He who brings food for others shall be provided for, but he who monopolises shall be cursed.”

And may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَخْتَكِرُ إِلَّا خَاطِيٌّ.”

He may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ اخْتَكَرَ طَعَامًا اَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا ثُمَّ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كَفَّارَةٌ.

“Whoever engages in monopoly for forty days, then give it all in charity, it will still not be sufficient to save them.”

And there is a hadith that stated,

إِنَّ الْحَاكِرِينَ وَقَتْلَةَ النُّفُوسِ يُحْشَرُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَعًا.

“Those who engage in monopoly and those guilty of murder shall be gathered in the same place with on Resurrection Day.”

Monopoly is to buy food, hoard it when the times are hard, and food becomes expensive. When people need it and hide it until a large profit can be made on it. They buy when prices are low, to keep it until price rise, or keeping the excess in crops with the same intention, this is not free from being severely reprehensible, and he who does so is in grave danger because of his wish for the prices to rise. Even were he to escape the charge of concealing food, he will not that of desiring the prices to increase which thing will surely cause hardship to the Muslims. The virtuous predecessors used to dislike trading in food altogether because

it is trading in necessities so that the merchant comes to detest ease and affluence for the people and love hard times and dear prices.

Usury [*Riba*]

As for usury, it is an immense sin and a great injustice. Allah, Exalted is He, say,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ. فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ.

“O you who believe! Fear Allah! Give up what remains of your demand for usury, if you are indeed believers. If you do not, be warned that Allah and His Messenger have declared war on you.”¹

Who can combat Allah and His Messenger? We seek Allah’s protection from being loathed, afflicted or wretched! The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, has cursed those who profit from usury, the agents, witness and those who write it.

He counted usury among the seven major sins, together with such as associating others with Allah and killing man, all of which Allah has forbidden. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الرِّبَا ثَلَاثَةٌ وَسَبْعُونَ بَابًا، أَبْسَرُهَا مِثْلُ أَنْ يَنْكِحَ الرَّجُلُ أُمَّهُ.

“Usury is of thirty-seven kinds, the least of which is equivalent to a man having intercourse with his mother.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَرْبَعَةٌ حَقٌّ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ لَا يُدْخِلَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُدَيِّقَهُمْ نَعِيمَهَا: مُدْمِنٌ خَمْرٍ، وَآكِلُ الرِّبَا، وَآكِلُ مَالِ الْيَتِيمِ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ، وَالْعَاقُ لِوَالِدَيْهِ.

“Four (kinds of people) are forbidden to enter the Garden and taste of its bliss, the alcoholic, the usurer, he who appropriates the property of orphans unjustly, and he who rebels against his parents.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 278-279.

الدَّهَبُ بِالذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةُ بِالْفِضَّةِ وَالْبُرُّ بِالْبُرِّ، وَالشَّعِيرُ بِالشَّعِيرِ وَالتَّمْرُ بِالتَّمْرِ وَالْمِلْحُ بِالْمِلْحِ مِثْلًا
بِمِثْلِ سَوَاءٍ بِسَوَاءٍ يَدًا يَدٍ، وَإِذَا اخْتَلَفَتْ هَذِهِ الْأَصْنَافُ، فَبِغَاوِ كَيْفَ شِئْتُمْ إِذَا كَانَ يَدًا يَدٍ.

“Gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, barley for barley, dates for dates, salt for salt, these should be like for like, equal for equal, given and taken on the spot. If the kinds differ, then sell as you wish so long as it is on the spot.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, made it clear in this hadith, the legal ruling concerning usury so to leave no room for disagreement or disobedience. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا.

“Take what the Messenger has brought you; and what he has forbidden you, desist.”¹

And the Exalted says,

فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

“Let those beware who disobey his orders lest an affliction befall them or a painful torment.”²

Thus, whoever exchanges gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, corn for corn, or dates for dates, must do so like for like, given and taken on the spot. If the kinds differ, for instance, wheat for corn, or corn for dates, different measures are permissible, and the exchange has to be concluded by each taking what is his immediately. There are many details here the place of which is the books of Jurisprudent [*fiqh*], this was but a summary.

You should beware to the extreme, O brother, may Allah have mercy on you, of usury, guard yourself against it carefully, for Allah has forbidden it to His servants, declaring it to be evil and devoid of all good or blessings [*baraka*].

Just as He says, Exalted is He,

¹ Surah 59 Al Hashr Verse 7.

² Surah 24 An Nur Verse 63.

يَمَحُوقُ اللَّهُ الرَّبَا وَيُرِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ.

“Allah will deprive usury of all blessing but will give increase for deeds of charity: For He loves not creatures ungrateful and wicked.”¹

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ. وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ. وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ.

“O believers! Devour not usury, doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah; that you may prosper. Fear the Fire which is prepared for those who reject Faith: And obey Allah and the Messenger; that you may obtain mercy.”²

فَتَأْمَلُوا وَانظُرُوا، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاحْذَرُوا.

So you should reflect and consider, fear Allah and be cautious,

Deferred Payment is Allowed

You should know that in deferred payment [*nasi'a*] while paying a higher price than that presently required, there is sufficient room to leave usury, and this is permissible and lawful, so let those who desire the profits of this world take advantage of it.

Fraudulent Practice Deceives

You should beware and keep away from the tricks and fraudulent practices that certain self-deceiving fools indulge. They pretend that usury is not usury, calling it “vows” and circulating it among themselves, thereby imagining that they are safe from its sin. And think that they have managed to escape the shame of it in this world and the Fire of it in the next. How unlikely! Tricks in usury are nothing other than usury. A vow [*nadhr*] is something that the servant gives away in benevolent deeds to please his Lord, only thus can it be valid. What these people do is observably different. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا نَذْرَ إِلَّا فِيمَا ابْتِغَايَ بِهِ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ.

“No vow is valid except that it leads to the good pleasure of Allah.”

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 276.

² Surah 3 Ala Imran Verses 130-132.

Certain jurists have said that to declare something a vow does alter its legal status in transaction. Even so, this will only affect its external appearance and how it is viewed in this world, but not its reality and its consequences in the hereafter. He who searches for what those scholars possessed of insight have said will find that they are all agreed in this.

The Imam Ghazali said concerning he who vows his wealth to another at the end of the year so that he has to pay no zakat on it and concerning other similar instance, “This all belongs to the deleterious kind of jurisprudence. He who has declared it permissible has meant it to be so only as concerns evading being asked to pay it according to the rules of this world, but when the matter returns to the Wisest of the wise, the Compeller of compellers, it will avail nothing.”

The Israelites have suffered many kinds of punishments from Allah for indulging in such tricks and deceptions, and this is well known to anyone who has studied the history of the ancient nations. Were it not for our concern for brevity we would have quoted some of the reports! The best of words is those that are brief but informative.

وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا.

“If Allah intends to trial anyone, you have no authority in the least for him against Allah.”¹

Another kind of usury [*riba*] is to wrongly appropriate people’s property. There are numerous manners to do this and forbidden by Allah, Exalted is He, when He says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ

“O believers! Devour not one another’s wealth wrongly.”²

Among the wrong manners of appropriating other people’s money are what injustice rulers and their aides extract from the Muslims in terms of taxes, duties, customs, etc. These are strictly forbidden. That

¹ Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 41.

² Surah 4 Ala Imran Verse 29.

which is acquired illegally is undoubtedly unlawful. Levy collectors of all kinds expose themselves to Allah's wrath and loathing. Several hadiths exist censuring them and describing the severity of their punishment. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“Levy collectors never enter the Garden.” لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ صَاحِبُ مَكْسٍ.

Yazid ibn Harun, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “He meant excise collectors.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“The levy collector is in the Fire.” إِنَّ صَاحِبَ الْمَكْسِ فِي النَّارِ.

Other ways of wrongly appropriating people's property are to take it unjustly by coercion or brigandage, theft, betrayal of trust, false oaths and false witness. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
مَنْ ظَلَمَ قَيْدَ شِبْرٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ طَوَّقَهُ مِنْ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ.

“He who takes a hand-span of land unjustly, Allah shall wrap it around his neck to the depth of seven earths.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

اتَّقُوا الظُّلْمَ فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Guard yourselves against injustice, for injustice will be darkness on Resurrection Day.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَأْخُذَ عَصَا أَخِيهِ بِعَيْرِ طَيْبِ نَفْسٍ مِنْهُ.

“It is unlawful for a Muslim to take his brother's cane (walking stick) without his agreement.”

The narrator of the hadith continued, “He said this to demonstrate how severely forbidden the property of a Muslim upon another Muslim.”

Concerning theft, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ السَّارِقَ يَسْرِقُ الْبَيْضَةَ فَتُقَطَّعُ يَدُهُ، وَيَسْرِقُ الْحَبْلَ فَتُقَطَّعُ يَدُهُ.

“May Allah curse the thief! He steals an egg and has his hand cut off or steals a rope and has his hand cut off.”

About betrayal, he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
آيَةُ الْمُنَافِقِ ثَلَاثٌ: إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ، وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ، وَإِذَا أُؤْتِمِنَ خَانَ.

“The signs of a hypocrite are three: When he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he breaks his promise; and when entrusted to him with something, he betrays his trust.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“There is no faith for him who cannot be trusted.” لَا إِيمَانَ لِمَنْ لَا أَمَانَةَ لَهُ.

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا دِينَ لِمَنْ لَا أَمَانَةَ وَلَا صَلَاةَ وَلَا زَكَاةَ لَهُ.

“There is no religion for him who cannot be trusted neither the ritual prayer nor the charity alms accepted.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

ثَلَاثُ مُتَعَلِّقَاتٍ بِالْعَرْشِ : الرَّحِمُ تَقُولُ : اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ بِكَ فَلَا اُقْطَعُ، وَالْأَمَانَةُ تَقُولُ : اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ بِكَ فَلَا اُخْفَرُ. وَالنَّعْمَةُ تَقُولُ : اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ بِكَ فَلَا اُكْفَرُ.

“Three things are clutching at the Throne:

- Kinship Ties (*Silatul Rahmi*), saying, “O Allah! I am by You, so let me not be severed”;
- Trust, saying, “O Allah! I am by You, so let me not be betrayed;”
- Favour, saying, “O Allah! I am by You, so let me not be denied.”

False Oaths

To appropriate other Muslims’ properties by shameless oaths or false witness is a major sin. Well-known formidable threats have been proffered against those who commit such things.

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ اقْتَطَعَ مَالَ أَخِيهِ الْمُسْلِمِ بِيَمِينٍ فَاجِرَةٍ فَلْيَتَبَوَّأْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ.

“He who appropriates the wealth of his brother Muslim by a shameless oath, let him take his seat in the Fire.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ حَلَفَ عَلَى مَالِ امْرِئٍ مُسْلِمٍ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبَان.

“Whoever swears an unjust oath concerning a Muslim’s property then meets Allah, Exalted is He, and he shall find Him angry with him.”

Abdullah ibn Masud, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’ blessings and peace be upon him, recited the confirmation for this in the Book of Allah, the Exalted,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ.

“As for those who sell the faith pledge to Allah and their oaths for a small price, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter: Nor will Allah speak to them or look at them on the Day of Rising, nor will He purify them of sin: They shall have a grievous penalty.”¹

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

الْكَبَائِرُ: الْإِشْرَاكُ بِاللَّهِ، وَعُفُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ، وَالْيَمِينُ الْعَمُوسُ.

“Major sins are to associate others with Allah, rebel against one’s parents, and drown (false) oaths.

Al-Hafiz al-Mundhiri, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “Such oath called drown-oaths [*al-yamin al-ghamus*] because it will drown the person who swears it into sin in this life and into the Fire in the next.”

This kind of false oath is that through which a person will appropriate something of his brother Muslim’s property, however insignificant, to the extent that he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, “Even a twig of arak [*siwak*]”. وَلَوْ قَضِيبًا مِنْ أَرَاكِ.

False Witness

As for appropriating other people’s property through false witness, it is to induce someone to testify falsely, knowingly and deliberately. Both the witness and he whom he has testified for will have sinned. Such a witness will have traded his life to come for the worldly

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 77.

benefit of another. False witness is among the worst of major sins, as stated in authentic hadiths.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, also said,
and repeating it three times, **عَدَلْتُ شَهَادَةَ الزُّورِ الْإِشْرَاقَ بِاللَّهِ.**
“False witness is equivalent to associating others with Allah.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
لَا تَزُولُ قَدَمَا شَهِدَ الزُّورَ حَتَّى يُؤْجِبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ النَّارَ.
“Before the feet of a false witness move from their place [on Judgment Day] Allah will have decreed the Fire for him.”

Bribes

Another form of unjust appropriation of people’s property is the bribes and gifts given to the ruler and government officials. These are unlawful. He may blessings and peace be upon him, cursed them,
الرَّشِي وَالْمُرْتَشِي وَالْأَرَائِشَ وَهُوَ السَّاعِي بَيْنَهُمَا.
“He who accepts or receives a bribe and those mediated between them.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
“Gifts to officials are illegal gains.” **هَذَايَا الْعُمَالِ غُلُولٌ.**
‘Officials’ refer to those working in all the government civil service.

It is incumbent to beware and preserve oneself from soliciting from others, except in cases of dire need and severe necessity. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,
لَا تَحِلُّ الْمَسْأَلَةُ لِغَنِيِّ وَلَا لِذِي مِرَّةٍ شَوِيٍّ.
“It not lawful for one who has some money to solicit (or beg) nor for one who is healthy and strong.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
لَا تَزَالُ الْمَسْأَلَةُ بِأَحَدِكُمْ حَتَّى يَلْقَى اللَّهَ وَلَيْسَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ مُرْعَةُ لَحْمٍ.
“One of you will keep soliciting until he meets Allah with not a piece of flesh left on his face.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَسْأَلَةُ الْعَنِيِّ نَارٌ، إِنْ أُعْطِيَ قَلِيلًا فَقَلِيلٌ، وَإِنْ أُعْطِيَ كَثِيرًا فَكَثِيرٌ.

“For one who is ‘not in need’ to solicit is equivalent to the Fire. If he is given little, then a little (in the Fire), and if he is given much then much.”

He, may blessings and peace when asked about when is a person considered to have sufficient so as ‘not in need’ to ask?” He answered, “When he had enough for lunch and dinner.”

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him,

لَأَنْ يَأْخُذَ أَحَدُكُمْ حَبْلَهُ، فَيَحْتَطِبَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ مِنْ أَنْ يَسْأَلَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُعْطَوْهُ أَوْ مَنَعُوهُ.

“For one of you to take his rope then gather some firewood is better than to solicit from others, whether you are given or not.”

And he said, may blessings and peace be upon him,

اسْتَغْنُوا عَنِ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ بِشَوْصِ السِّوَاكِ.

“Make do without asking others, even if you (pretend you just eaten and thus need) to use a *siwak*.”

Alcoholic Beverages

We now see fit to mention something of how forbidden and blameworthy alcohol is. This part of the book seems most appropriate to do so since it will constitute the completion of the discourse on circumspection regarding food, beverages, and other things.

Alcoholic beverages are forbidden by Allah. He commanded the people to avoid them both in His Clear Book and by the tongue of His trustworthy Messenger. He says, Exalted is He,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ. إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقَعَ بَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ. فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنتَهُونَ.

“O believers! Intoxicants and gambling, the dedication of stones, and divination by arrows are an abomination, of Satan’s handwork: avoid such them, that you may prosper. Satan’s plan seeks to excite enmity and

hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and prayer: will you not then abstain?"¹

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَزْنِي الزَّانِي حِينَ يَزْنِي وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ، وَلَا يَسْرِقُ السَّارِقُ حِينَ يَسْرِقُ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ،
وَلَا يَشْرَبُ الْخَمْرَ حِينَ يَشْرَبُهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ،

“At the time he commits adultery, the adulterer is not a believer; at the time he steals, the thief is not a believer; at times he drinks, he who drinks an alcoholic beverage is not a believer.”

How utterly forbidden and reprehensible is a thing which causes a man's faith to abandon him when doing it!

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْخَمْرَ، وَشَارِبَهَا، وَسَاقِيَهَا، وَمُبْتَاعَهَا، وَبَائِعَهَا، وَعَاصِرَهَا، وَمُعْتَصِرَهَا، وَحَامِلَهَا،
وَالْمَحْمُولَةَ إِلَيْهِ.

“Allah has cursed alcoholic beverages, as well as he who drinks, serves, buys, sells, makes, orders, carries, or receives them.” In another version, adds, “and he who paid for its price.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلَا يَشْرَبِ الْخَمْرَ.

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should refrain from alcoholic beverages.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مُذْمِنُ الْخَمْرِ إِنْ مَاتَ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى كَعَابِدٍ وَثَنٍ.

“When he dies, the alcohol addict shall meet Allah, Exalted is He, as an idol worshipper.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ: مُذْمِنُ الْخَمْرِ، وَقَاطِعُ الرَّحِمِ، وَمُصَدِّقُ السَّحْرِ.

¹ Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 90-91.

“Three shall never enter the Garden: the alcohol addict, the severer of kinship bonds, and the believer in sorcery.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

اجْتَنِبُوا الْخَمْرَ فَإِنَّهَا مِفْتَاحُ كُلِّ شَرٍّ.

“Avoid alcohol, for it is the key to every evil.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْخَمْرُ جِمَاعُ الْإِثْمِ، وَالنِّسَاءُ حَبَائِلُ الشَّيْطَانِ، وَحُبُّ الدُّنْيَا رَأْسُ كُلِّ خَطِيئَةٍ.

“Alcohol seed of all sins; women are the snares of the Devil. The love of this world leads to every sin.”

Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said, “When alcohol was prohibited, the companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, took to visiting each other, saying, “Alcohol has been forbidden and made equivalent to idolatry.” meaning in its magnitude as a sin.

He may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ شَرِبَ الْخَمْرَ خَرَجَ نُورُ الْإِيمَانِ مِنْ حَوْفِهِ.

“He who drinks alcohol, the light of faith leaves his inward.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ شَرِبَ الْخَمْرَ سَقَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ جَهَنَّمَ.

“He who drinks alcohol, Allah shall give him the boiling water of Hell to drink.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

كُلُّ مُسْكِرٍ حَرَامٌ، وَإِنَّ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَهْدًا لَمَنْ شَرِبَ الْخَمْرَ أَنْ يَسْقِيَهُ مِنْ طِينَةِ الْحَبَالِ. قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَمَا طِينَةُ الْحَبَالِ؟ قَالَ: عَرَقُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ أَوْ عُصَاةُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ.

“Every intoxicant is forbidden. It is a covenant set by Allah that he who drinks alcohol, shall force him to drink the mud of insanity. They asked, “O Messenger of Allah! What is this mud of insanity?” He answered, “That which oozes from the skins of those in Hell.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِذَا شَرِبُوا الْخَمْرَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ، ثُمَّ إِنْ شَرِبُوا فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ، ثُمَّ إِنْ شَرِبُوا فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ، ثُمَّ إِنْ شَرِبُوا فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ.

“If they drink alcohol, whip them, if they drink again, whip them again, if they drink again, whip them again, then if they drink again, kill them.”

Al-Hafiz al-Mundhiri, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “Several authentic sources mention the execution of the chronic alcoholic, but it was abrogated. And Allah knows best.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

“Alcohol is the mother of all filthy evil. الْخَمْرُ أُمُّ الْحَبَائِثِ.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ شَرِبَ الْخَمْرَ فِي الدُّنْيَا لَمْ يَشْرَبْهَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ.

“Whoever drinks alcohol in this world shall not drink the wine of the Garden in the hereafter.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ شَرِبَ الْخَمْرَ لَمْ يَقْبَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ صَلَاةً أَرْبَعِينَ صَبَاحًا.

“He who drinks alcohol, Allah does not accept his ritual prayers for forty mornings.”

There is much more that can be quoted about the prohibition of alcohol, its blameworthy state, and the warnings proffered against it. However, that which we have quoted should be sufficient for him to whom Allah has decreed success. So you should beware dear servants of Allah of this evil beverage which Allah has forbidden and made him who drinks it subject to wrath, loathing, and shame both in this world and the next. He who is afflicted with drinking it should repent before he is punished or dies and ends up in the Fire, subject to the wrath of the Compeller.

﴿نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ وَالسَّلَامَةَ مِنْ جَمِيعِ الْبَالِيَاتِ﴾.

We ask Allah for us and you for safety and security from all afflictions.

Guarding the Heart, the Body Parts and Senses

You should know, O brothers, may Allah make us and you of those whose inward and outward are good and upright in believing the truth and acting accordingly-that among the most important things to every believer is to watch his heart and bodily members and senses, look after them, and strive to guard and keep them from that which is hateful to Allah and use them in that which is liked by Allah and pleasing to Him. He, Exalted is He, says, **إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا**

“Verily for every act of hearing, seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be subject to questioning (on the Day of Reckoning).”¹

The heart, the bodily members and senses are among the greatest favours of Allah upon His servants. He who uses them in His obedience and adorns them with what is pleasing to Him and uses them in that for which they were created thus shows gratitude for the favour, guards what should be guarded, and excels in service. For him, Allah shall give the reward of the thankful and the recompense of the excellent, for Allah never wastes the wages of those who act with excellence. But he who let’s loose his heart and bodily members and senses in that which Allah has forbidden, neglects them and leads them to perdition, and leaves them unguarded, he thus denies the favour of Allah upon him and deserves to be censured and punished. They shall testify against him before Allah and reveal whatever acts of disobedience he has used them to commit.

Just as the Exalted say, **يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ**.
“On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions.”²

And the Exalted says,

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَى أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ.

“That Day shall We set a seal on their mouths. But their hands will speak to us, and their feet bear witness, to all that they did.”³

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 36.

² Surah 24 An Nur Verse 24.

³ Surah 36 Ya Sin Verse 65.

As for the heart, it is the chief of the bodily members and senses, their commander. Upon it depends whether they are good or corrupt. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْعَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ.

“In the body is a piece of flesh which when good, the whole body is good, but when corrupt, the whole body is corrupt, and this is the heart.”

As for the bodily members and senses, we mean by them the seven organs: the eye, the ear, the tongue, the stomach, the private parts, the hand and the foot.

The Eyes

The eye is an immense grace bestowed by Allah upon His servant. Allah created it so that the servant may use it to look at His wondrous creatures in His earth and heavens, that he may increase in knowledge of his Lord and certainty, and also in obedience and service to Him; that he may see through the shadows and may be able to fulfil his needs. If he uses it in what it was created for, he will be one of the obedient and the grateful. But if he releases it to roam in what Allah has forbidden, such as looking lustfully at forbidden women, then he will have disobeyed and exposed himself to both punishment and afflictions. So, let the believer beware of this to the extreme or of looking at another Muslim with disdain or scorn or of seeking out the shame and faults of other Muslims.

It is incumbent that he should also not look persistently at the permissible pleasures of this world and the things that the ego desires, for this would disperse the concentration of the heart and lead it to attend to the improvement of its worldly affairs and hoarding its debris at the expense of the hereafter and preparation for it. To preserve one's eyesight from this is very important, especially for those who wish to concentrate on Allah and the last abode.

Strictly forbidden is looking at women and things such as forbidden women and lovely desirable images. Allah, the Exalted, says,

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ.

“Tell the believers to lower their gazes and preserve their private parts.”¹

The Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said, الْنَّظَرُ سَهْمٌ مَسْمُومٌ مِنْ سِهَامِ إِبْلِيسَ، مَنْ تَرَكَهَا مَخَافَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ عِبَادَةً يَجِدُ حَلَاوَتَهَا فِي قَلْبِهِ.

“The gaze is a poisoned arrow of Iblis. Whoever restrain it for the fear of Allah, Allah shall grant him such acts of worship as so sweet to his heart.”

And Jesus, may peace be upon him, said, “The gaze plants lust in the heart, and that is a sufficient temptation.”

The Ear

The ear is also among the greatest graces. It was created for the servant to listen to the words of his Lord and the Sunna of his Prophet, and the words of the scholars and sages among the virtuous servants of Allah. The benefit of this is to behave in such a manner as to please Allah and use the ear in the management of those worldly affairs that are a help in the journey to the hereafter. But if he uses it to listen to what Allah has forbidden, for instance, lying, backbiting and indecencies, he will have denied the grace and shown ingratitude, for he will have used it in other than the purpose of its creation.

Imam al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, says, “Never think that only the speaker sins, for the listener is his partner and will be considered one of the backbiters.”

He who gives ear to something good is a partner to it, and he who gives ear to something evil shares in its sin. And Allah knows best.

The Tongue

The tongue is also among the greatest of Allah’s graces upon His servant. There are in it many good and great benefits for he who preserves it and uses it only for its creation. But there will be much evil and

¹ Surah 24 An Nur Verse 30.

immense harm in it for those who neglect to preserve it and use it other than the purpose of its creation.

Allah, Exalted is He, created it for the servant to invoke him abundantly, recite His Book, counsel His servants, invite them to His obedience, teach them His immense rights upon them, and to express whatever thoughts need to be expressed for the fulfilment of his needs, both of this world and the next. If he uses it in this manner, he will have shown gratitude; but if he uses it for other than the purpose of its creation for, he will have been one of the iniquitous transgressors.

The affairs of the tongue are most important, for it is the organ with most control over the servant and the most influence in leading him to perdition should he fail to control it and prevent it from what Allah forbids it. The hadith states,

وَهَلْ يَكُفُّ النَّاسَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ أَوْ عَلَى مَنَاخِرِهِمْ إِلَّا حَصَائِدُ أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ.

“The people will be thrown into the Fire on their faces or noses all because of the doings of their tongues!”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكَلِّمْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ.

“He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak words of goodness or remain silent.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ امْرَأً قَالَ خَيْرًا فَعَنِمَ، أَوْ سَكَتَ عَنْ شَرٍّ فَسَلِمَ.

“May Allah have mercy on a man who either speaks words of goodness and thus profits, or refrains from saying evil, and thus stays safe.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ صَمَتَ نَجَا.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

كُلُّ كَلَامِ ابْنِ آدَمَ عَلَيْهِ لَا لَهُ إِلَّا ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَمْرٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ نَهْيٌ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ.

“All the speech of the Son of Adam shall be counted against, not for him, except the remembrance of Allah, enjoining good or forbidding evil.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ مَا يَظُنُّ أَنَّ تَبْلُغَ مَا بَلَغَتْ، يَكْتُتِبُ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهَا
 رِضْوَانَهُ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يَلْقَاهُ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ سَخَطِ اللَّهِ مَا يَظُنُّ أَنَّ تَبْلُغَ مَا
 بَلَغَتْ يَكْتُتِبُ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهَا فِي النَّارِ سَخَطَهُ إِلَى يَوْمٍ يَلْقَاهُ.

“Verily a man may speak a word deserving the good pleasure of Allah, not giving it much thought, yet because of it, Allah grants him His good pleasure until the day he meets Him. Another man may speak a word deserving the wrath of Allah, not giving it much thought, because of it Allah decrees His wrath upon him in the Fire until the day he meets Him.”

In a hadith, it states,

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مَا يُلْقِي لَهَا فَيَهْوِي بِهَا فِي النَّارِ أَبَعَدَ مِنَ الثُّرَيَّا.

“Indeed, a servant may utter a word, not giving it a second thought, but it causes him to plummet in the Fire.”

The perils of the tongue are immense and frightening. Only maintaining silence and speaking only when strictly necessary may save one from them. A person should keep so occupied with reciting the Book of Allah and remembering Him in abundance as to prevent him from delving into falsehood or what does not concern him.

Lying

One of the greatest faults of the tongue is lying, which is to state other than what is, whether by affirming what is not, such as saying, “Such a thing has happened,” when it has not, or by denying what is, such as saying, “Such thing has not happened” when it has. The sin of lying is immense. Lying contradict faith, and the liar exposes himself to the curse of the All-Merciful. Allah, Exalted is He, say,

إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ.

“It is those who believe not in the Signs of Allah, that forge falsehood: it is they who lie!”¹

¹ Surah 16 An Nahl Verse 105.

And the Exalted says, فَجَعَلَ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ.

“Then invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie!”¹

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“Whoever wishes to curse himself, let him lie.” مَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَلْعَنَ نَفْسَهُ فَلْيَكْذِبْ.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ، وَلَا يَزَالُ الْعَبْدُ يَكْذِبُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الْكَذِبَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا.

“Verify, lying leads to committing evil deeds against Allah’s command, and indeed these lead to the Fire. A servant may lie and keep on lying until he is written down a liar in the sight of Allah.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him was asked, “Does the believer lie?” He answered, “No, only those who forge lies do not believe in the signs of Allah.”

Backbiting

Another great fault of the tongue is backbiting, which is for you to talk about your brother in his absence which he would have resented had he heard them. These may be faults in his religious practice, body, wife, children or even the way he walks, dresses or anything else about him. It is the same, whether through words that are either spoken or written or by sign language. Thus, have such scholars stated, may Allah have mercy on them, as Imam al-Ghazali, Imam al-Nawawi and others.

Backbiting is strictly forbidden, Allah, Exalted is He says,

وَلَا يَغْتَابَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَحِيمٌ.

“Backbite not one another. would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would find it loathsome. And so fear Allah, Allah is indeed Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.”²

¹ Surah 3 Ala Imran Verse 61.

² Surah 49 Al Hujurat Verse 12.

Thus did Allah, the Exalted, liken the backbiter to he who eats the flesh of his dead Muslim brother. How mighty a castigation and rebuke that is! The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said, **كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ حَرَامٌ دَمُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعَرَضُهُ.**

“All of a Muslim is forbidden to another Muslim, his blood (or kill him), his property (cannot acquire) and his honour (no backbiting him).”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, “*Riba* [usury] is of seventy-two kinds, the least of which is like a man having to marry his mother. The worst *riba* is for a man to insult or dishonour his Muslim brother. Once when Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, “It is not enough that Safiyya should be such and such? Some narrators said that Aisha meant Safiyya was a short person. Then he may blessings and peace be upon him, said, “You have said such a word that were it to be mixed with the ocean. It would change it.”

Meaning it is so repulsive and indecent that if it were to be mixed with the water of the ocean, it would pollute the whole of it.

Once when a woman said of another who had just gone out, “How lengthy is her tail (referring to her dress)!” Then he, may blessings and peace be upon him, told her, “Vomit it! Vomit it!” She vomited, and a piece of meat came out of her mouth. Notice how indecent and repulsive such backbiting phrases are, which is equivalent to eating her flesh. O servant of Allah reflects on how rebuke is backbiting! How easy it is to fall into it except for those whom Allah has mercy. They are just a few!

You should know that when you notice a fault or failing in your brother Muslim and think it can be remedied, it is incumbent upon you to talk to him about it, but in private. If you are unable to do this or he does not get the guidance, the fault lies in you. Therefore, do not add one more repulsive to it by exposing him and informing others of his fault in his absence. You would thus have brought two afflictions upon yourself.

Tale-Bearing

Among the tongue's faults is tale-bearing, which is to inform each party of what the other said about him, to cause discord and sedition.

Allah, Exalted is He, says, وَلَا تُطْعُ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ. هَمَّازٌ مَشَاءٌ بِنَمِيمٍ.

“Obey not the type of despicable men, ready with oaths, a slanderer (backbiter), going about with calumnies (tale-bearing).”¹

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“The ‘tale-bearer’ never enters the Garden. لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَتَاتٌ.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

شِرَارُ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الْمَشَاءُونَ بِالنَّمِيمَةِ الْمُفَرِّقُونَ بَيْنَ الْأَحْبَةِ.

“The worst among Allah’s servants are those who go about tale-bearing, sowing dissension among close people.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ النَّمِيمَةَ وَالْحَقْدَ فِي النَّارِ، لَا يَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي قَلْبٍ مُسْلِمٍ.

“Indeed, those who tale-bearing and animosity will both go to the Fire, they can never coexist in a Muslim heart.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَيْسَ مِنِّي ذُو حَقْدٍ وَلَا نَمِيمَةٍ وَلَا كَهَانَةٍ وَلَا أَنَا مِنْهُ.

“He is not of me who harbours animosity, nor a tale-bearing, nor a soothsayer, neither am I of him.” Then he recited,

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدْ احْتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا.

“And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, bear (on themselves) a calumny and a manifest sin.”²

One of the virtuous predecessors, may Allah have mercy on them, said, “The talebearer can only be the child of adulterers.”

The most repulsive and flagrant kind of tale-bearing is that which reaches the ears of rulers, governors, and so on. It is called reporting [siaya]. He who does this usually intends to induce the ruler to harm the victim, take his wealth, and treat him in an evil manner. Its sin is immense. It is much worse than tale-bearing among ordinary people.

¹ Surah 68 al Qalam Verse 10-11.

² Surah 33 Al Ahzab Verse 58.

Of the tongue's faults is to insult a Muslim and offend him to his face. He may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

سَبَابُ الْمُؤْمِنِ فُسُوقٌ وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ.

“To insult a Muslim is corruption, while to kill him in disbelief.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْمُتَسَابِّانِ شَيْطَانَانِ يَتَهَاتَرَانِ وَيَتَكَاذِبَانِ.

“Those who insult each other are but two devils abusing and slandering one another.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مِنَ الْكَبَائِرِ السُّبَّتَانِ بِالسُّبَّةِ. “To return two insults for one is a major sin.”

Another fault of the tongue is to mock and scorn a Muslim or laugh at him in disdain. Allah, Exalted is He, say,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ.

“O believers! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the latter are better than the former: Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the latter are better than the former: Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other nor call each other by offensive nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, to be used of one after he has believed: And those who do not repent are indeed doing wrong.”¹

He said, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him,

بِحَسْبِ الرِّئِ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنَّ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ.

“It is sufficient evil for a man to despise his Muslim brother.”

Also, among the faults of the tongue are false oaths, false witness, cursing, saying to a Muslim, “You disbeliever!” And passing judgment

¹ Surah 49 Al Hujurat Verse 11.

on any of the people of the Qibla that they are guilty of disbelief, heresy, or corruption without first having ascertained the charge, praying for evil to befall other Muslims, making false promises, double talk, all other forms of repulsive or indecent speech, as well as disputing, arguing contentiously, competing for speech, frequent quarrelling, and talking about that which does not concern you. These were all dispraised in numerous verses of the Quran and well-known hadith.

The believer who is concerned for himself and his religion should be just as he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، فَلْيُكَلِّمْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ.

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak words of goodness or remain silent.”

The faults of the tongue are many. The Imam Ghazali, the Proof of Islam mentions twenty of them in the section in *Ihya* dealing with the faults of the tongue. He discoursed on them exhaustively, as befits his venerable rank and immense knowledge. May Allah be pleased with him and reward him well on behalf of Islam and the Muslims.

The Stomach

It is most important to preserve and control the stomach, and this means that first of all one should prevent unlawfully or suspect food from reaching it, avoid unnecessary appetites, then avoid satiety with lawful food. We have already discussed unlawful and suspect food in the context of piousness.

As for excess in the pursuit of appetites and uninterrupted satiety, they are discouraged [*makruh*] and lead to many kinds of ailments and harm, among which are hardness of the heart, indolence of the bodily members in obedience, lack of energy during acts worship, reduced capacity to comprehend knowledge and wisdom, diminished compassion and solicitude for the weak and needy among Muslims.

The pursuit of appetites and uninterrupted satiety in excess may lead to falling into the suspect or even the unlawful, and this is feared

The Proof of Islam, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “Eating lawful food to satiety is the origin of all evils, how much more so with the unlawful?”

Once he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا مَلَأَ ابْنُ آدَمَ وَغَاءَ شَرًّا مِنْ بَطْنِهِ حَسْبُ ابْنِ آدَمَ لَقِيمَاتٍ يُقَمِّنُ صُلْبَهُ، فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا مَحَالَةَ: فَثُلُثُ لِطْعَامِهِ وَثُلُثُ لِشْرَابِهِ وَثُلُثُ لِنَفْسِهِ.

“Never does the Son of Adam fill a worse vessel than his stomach. It should suffice the Son of Adam a few morsels to keep his back straight, but if he must, then one third for his food, one third for his beverage, and one third for his breath.”

In a narration from he, may blessings and peace be upon him,

شِرَارُ أُمَّتِي الَّذِينَ عُذُّوا بِالنَّعِيمِ وَنَبَتَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْسَامُهُمْ، وَإِنَّمَا هِمَّةُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَلْوَانُ الطَّعَامِ وَأَلْوَانُ الثِّيَابِ، وَيَتَشَدَّقُونَ فِي الْكَلَامِ.

“The worst among my community are those who are born in luxury and fed from it, and eat a variety of food, drink a variety of beverages, wear a variety of clothes, and they speak pompously.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَطْوَلُ النَّاسِ شَبَعًا فِي الدُّنْيَا أَطْوَلُهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ.

“Those who are most satiated in this world are those who will be most hungry in the hereafter.”

Ali, may Allah preserve his honour, said, “He whose only concern is that which enters his stomach is worth only as much as that which comes out of it.”

A believer should control his appetites out of continence, contentment, and detachment from the world. When he eats, he should stop short of satiety, eat whatever lawful food is available without choosing that which is more pleasurable or more following his taste. Opting for the cheaper and more frugal kinds is nearer to Allah-fearing,

less burdensome, farther from lust, and more following the pattern of the virtuous predecessors.

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, lived mostly on barley which they kneaded and baked for him without prior sifting, since sifts were unknown to them at the time. He and his wives, may Allah be pleased with them, lived for months on dates and water, no fire was on for any of them, either for cooking or any other purpose.

Whenever a believer eats, he should do so observing good manners and according to the *Sunnah*. Thus, at the beginning, he must say, "In the Name of Allah [*Bismillah*]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ

At the end he says, All praises belong to Allah [*Alhamdulillah*] اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
Eat to use it to help him obey Allah and give him the strength to worship Him, and observe all other good manners mentioned in hadith.

The Private Parts

It is important to preserve one's private parts, for they may lead to danger. In His Book, in praises for His believing servants, Allah, says, وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ. إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ.

"Those who guard their private parts (abstain from sex) except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or the captives whom their right hands possess, for in their case they are free from blame. But those whose desires exceed those limits are transgressors."¹

When the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, was asked what things are most likely to lead people into the Fire, he answered, "The two hollow things, the mouth and the private parts."

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ وَقَاهُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ مَا بَيْنَ لَحْيَيْهِ وَرَجُلَيْهِ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ.

¹ Surah 23 al Mukminin Verses 5-7.

“Whoever Allah protects from the evil that is between his moustache and beard, and that is between his legs, he shall be admitted to the Garden.”

O believer! You must guard your private parts, and this is easier when the heart is prevented from thinking of unlawful things and the eyes from looking at forbidden things. A hadith narration states,

الْعَيْنُ تَرَى وَالنَّفْسُ تَتَمَنَّى، وَالْفَرْجُ يُصَدِّقُ ذَلِكَ أَوْ يُكَذِّبُهُ.

“The adultery of the eye is to see, and the soul desires and wishes, and the private parts believe, confirm or deny it.”

Perilous Indecencies and Major Sins

Keep away and beware to the extreme of adultery and homosexuality for these are perilous indecencies and major sins leading to perdition, Allah forbids strictly and categorically. The Exalted say,

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزِّنَا إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا.

“Approach not adultery, for it is an indecency and an evil road.”¹

And He the Exalted say,

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا. يُضَاعَفْ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيهِ مُهَانًا. إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا.

“Those who invoke not any other god with Allah, nor slay such life as Allah has made sacred except for cause, nor commit fornication; and any that does this (not only) meets punishment. (But) the Penalty on the Day of Judgment doubled for him, and he will dwell therein in ignominy, Unless he repents, believes and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”²

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَزْنِي الزَّانِي حِينَ يَزْنِي وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ.

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 32.

² Surah al Furqaan Verses 68-70.

“At the time when the adulterer commits adultery, he is not a believer.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

الْمُقِيمُ عَلَى الزِّنَا كَعَابِدٍ وَثْنٍ.

“He who persists in committing adultery is like the idol worshipper.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِنَّ الزَّانَةَ يَأْتُونَ تَشْتَعِلُ فُرُوجُهُمْ نَارًا.

“Indeed, the adulterers shall come with their private parts on fire.”
Meaning on the Resurrection Day.

And he said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ، وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ، وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ: شَيْخٌ زَانٍ، وَمَلِكٌ كَذَّابٌ، وَعَائِلٌ مُسْتَكْبِرٌ.

“Three shall not be spoken to by Allah on Resurrection Day, nor shall He purify them nor look at them, and theirs shall be a painful torment: An adulterous elderly man, a king who lies, and an arrogant poor man.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

“Verily, adultery brings poverty.”
إِنَّ الزِّنَا يَجْلِبُ الْفَقْرَ.

It was narrated that a foul-smelling wind shall blow upon the People of the Gathering [*Mahsyar*], extremely offensive both to the righteous and the dissolute, and they will be told, “This is the stench of the private parts of adulterers.”

Also, an authentic hadith states that the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, saw the adulterers and adulteresses in something like an oven which sent flames of fire on them from underneath them so that they screamed and tried to raise themselves - one of kind of torment meted out by Allah to them in the Intermediary Realm [*Alam Barzakh*]. Allah, Exalted is He, say of the destruction of the people of Lots following their outrageous persistence in committing sexual perversion,

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ مَّنضُودٍ. مُّسَوِّمَةً
عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٍ.

“When Our Decree issued, We turned the cities upside down, and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread, layer on layer, Marked as from your Lord: These are never far from the wrongdoers!”¹

Some commentators said that these stones are never far from the wrongdoers who commit the same act.

It has reached us that two men were committing the same homosexual indecency in a house on the roof of which was one of these stones which had been sent upon Lot’s people. The stone pierced the roof and fell on them, killing them. News of this reached one of our predecessors. He remarked, “Allah has spoken the truth, “These are never far from the wrongdoers!”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَخَوْفُ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَى أُمَّتِي: عَمَلُ قَوْمِ لُوطٍ.

“What I fear most for my community is the deed of Lot’s people.”

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said that Allah had cursed seven of His creatures from above seven heavens. Thus, did he repeat the curse against the first kind three times, while finding it sufficient to curse each of the other kinds only once. Accursed is he who commits the deed of Lot’s people! Accursed is he who commits the deed of Lot’s people! Accursed is he who commits the deed of Lot’s people! Accursed is he who slaughters in the name other than Allah! Accursed is he who commits an unnatural act with an animal! Accursed is he who rebels against his parents! Accursed is he who marries a woman and her sister (or daughter)! Accursed is he who changes the markings of the land! Accursed is he who claims to belong to other than his patrons!

Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, said, The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah 11 Hud Verse 82-83.

أَرْبَعَةٌ يُصَبِّحُونَ فِي غَضَبِ اللَّهِ وَيُمْسُونَ فِي سَخَطِ اللَّهِ. قُلْتُ مَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ:
 "الْمُتَشَبِّهُونَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ بِالنِّسَاءِ، وَالْمُتَشَبِّهَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ بِالرِّجَالِ، وَالَّذِي يَأْتِي الْبَهِيمَةَ،
 وَالَّذِي يَأْتِي الرِّجَالَ.

“Four are in Allah’s wrath in the morning and Allah’s displeasure in the evening.” I asked, “Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?” He answered, “Women who seek to look like men, men who seek to look like women, he who has intercourse with an animal and the person who has intercourse with men.”

Much has been handed down forbidding illegal intercourse, homosexuality and detailing the punishments of those who commit them. To realise how repulsive, forbidden, and deserving of punishment they are, it suffices to know what Allah has ordained for them in this world before the next.

Discourse concerning the unmarried males and females who are guilty of proven illegal intercourse are to receive a hundred lashes each and be banished from their homelands for a year. Married males and females are to be stoned to death. If one is married and the other not, each is sentenced according to his status.

The statutory punishment for homosexuality is as that for illegal heterosexual intercourse according to the strongest opinion. However, some think that both partners should be killed and there are some indications to support this in hadith. Others think that they should be burned.

﴿ نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ بَلَاءٍ ۖ ﴾

{We ask Allah for safety from every affliction.}

As for intercourse with an animal, it is a formidable sin, and he who commits it is accursed, as in the hadith quoted above. Another hadith says, “He who has intercourse with a beast, kill him and kill it”.

As for masturbation with the hand, it is repulsive, blameworthy and leads to many ailments and affliction. Some people are afflicted with it, so let them beware. It has been transmitted that Allah curses he who has intercourse with his hand and that Allah once destroyed a community who used to play with their private parts.

اللَّهُمَّ يَا عَزِيزُ يَا خَبِيرُ، طَهِّرْ قُلُوبَنَا مِنَ النِّفَاقِ،

O Allah! O Omniscient! O Aware! Purify our hearts from hypocrisy,

وَحَصِّنْ فُرُوجَنَا مِنَ الْفَوَاحِشِ،

And protect our private parts from indecencies,

وَالْأَلْفُ بِنَا وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ.

And treat us and all Muslims with gentleness.

The Hands

You must let your hands loose in charity, in helping to fulfil other Muslims' needs, in writing down knowledge and wisdom, and in earning lawful money to use it to assist you in your religion. You must preserve them from causing bodily injury to another Muslim without right, or to appropriate what is not yours of their property by such means as injustice, betrayal or false transactions.

The Feet

You should beware of using your feet to walk to forbidden or sinful things, assist in a wrong, go to an unjust ruler, to frivolous and distracting ends or to anything else in which there is neither good nor profit. Walk with them only to what is good and virtuous such as acquiring beneficial knowledge, going to the mosque for congregational prayers, other devotional activities, visiting one's brothers in Allah, fulfilling the needs of Muslims, and discharging such rights of theirs as visiting the sick, escorting funerals and other such deeds of goodness and righteousness.

On the whole, your bodily members and senses are among the greatest of Allah's favours upon you. He created them for you that you

may use them in His obedience. If you use them in what they were created for, namely in acts of obedience and conformity, you will have shown gratitude and become one of the people of excellence. But if you use them in other than what they were created for, namely in acts of disobedience and contravention, you will have denied Allah's favour and betrayed His trust, for the bodily members and senses, are among what He has committed to your trust.

We have now completed discussing the seven organs in a comprehensive yet brief manner.

The Heart

Our purpose now is to discuss briefly something of what concerns the heart, which is the master and king of the bodily members and senses. It is the location of beliefs, traits of character, and intentions, whether these are praiseworthy or blameworthy. There is no possible happiness in this world or the next save for he who purifies and cleans it of vices, all things repulsive and adorns it with virtues and all things beautiful, Allah, Exalted is He, says,

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا. فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا. قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا. وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا.

“By the soul, and that which shape and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and it's right; Truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it!”¹

Blameworthy traits of character and loathsome attributes are numerous, and so are the praiseworthy traits and agreeable attributes that a believer should embellish his heart with. The Imam Ghazali, the Proof of Islam wrote on this exhaustively in the second half of the *Ihya* when discoursing first on ruinous, then on saving issues. In this part, his discourse is the most authoritative and dependable, for he was complete in knowledge, worship, detachment, gnosis and because he had collected the discourses of those of the virtuous predecessor and master of the path who had preceded him. The Muslims scholars and saints of all lands and

¹ Surah 91 Ash Sham Verses 7-10.

countries who came after him followed in his footsteps and took after his light, and this is well known by anyone who is steeped in these sciences and has plunged into the secrets of the path of Allah where they were revealed to him.

Now that you know this, know that the blameworthy qualities of the hearts are none other than its ailments. They may lead it to perdition in this world and the next. A believer can never dispense with treating his heart and seeking after its well-being and safety, for only he will be saved who comes to Allah with a sound heart.

You are also well aware that both blameworthy and praiseworthy qualities of the heart are numerous and studying them is lengthy. Since we intend to be brief and concise, we refer those wishing for an exhaustive account to the explanations of the Proof of Islam in the *Ihya*. Here we shall mention briefly those ruinous things which the heart should be purified from and those saving things with which it should be embellished. We shall restrict ourselves to things which are widespread and frequent, and the understanding of which is a necessity.

First, of which, a person must purify and free his heart from the vice of doubting Allah, His Messenger and the hereafter. This is one of the worst ailments of the heart. It causes perdition in the hereafter and is greatly harmful, especially at the time of death. It may lead, may Allah protect us, to an evil ending to life. Some people are afflicted with such doubts, and it is not permissible for them to keep them to themselves, hide them in their hearts, then meet Allah still harbouring them.

On the contrary, they should strive to the utmost to remove these doubts. The best course of action is to ask those who are learned, are people of certainty, Allah-fearing, and detachment from the world, and who know about Allah the Exalted and His religion. If they can find none of these, let them study the books they have authored on the science of Oneness [*Tawhid*] and Certainty [*Yaqin*].

By doubts, I do not mean such thoughts and ruminations as one often has concerning the details of one's faith, but the falsity of which is

obvious and one's heart is resolutely set against them, and which the soul finds detestable and repulsive. These are obsessions [*waswas*]. It is sufficient to detest and turn away from them and seek Allah's protection against them.

One of the worst ailments of the heart and most ruinous attributes is arrogance, which is an attribute of the devils.

Allah, Exalted is He says concerning Iblis, **أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ**.
 "He refused, was arrogant, and became one of the disbelievers."¹

Arrogant persons are detestable to Allah. Just as the Exalted says, **إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِينَ**.
 "He loves not the arrogant."²

"Allah loves not the arrogant boaster."³ **إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ**

Pride and boastfulness are attributes of the arrogant person, and the latter is in danger of his heart being upon by Allah. The Exalted says, **كَذَٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُّتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ**.

"Thus does Allah seal up every arrogant, overbearing heart."⁴

The signs of Allah are deflected persons who are arrogant. The Exalted says, **سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ**.
 "I shall deflect away My signs from those who are arrogant in the earth without due right."⁵

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said, Allah the Exalted said,

الْكِبْرِيَاءُ رِدَائِي، وَالْعِظْمَةُ إِزَارِي، فَمَنْ نَارَعَنِي وَاحِدًا مِنْهُمَا أَلْقَيْتُهُ فِي النَّارِ.
 "Pride is My upper garment, and might is My lower garment. He who contests Me any of them, I shall cast him into the Fire."

¹ Surah 2 Al Baqara Verse 34.

² Surah 16 An Nahl Verse 23.

³ Surah 31 Luqman Verse 18.

⁴ Surah 40 Ghaafir Verse 35.

⁵ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 146.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
يُحْشَرُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَمْثَالَ الذَّرِّ فِي صُورِ الرِّجَالِ، يَعْشَاهُمُ الدُّلُّ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ.
“The arrogant shall be gathered on Resurrection Day as small as ants but in human form, surrounded by humiliation from every direction.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
مَنْ تَعَاظَمَ فِي نَفْسِهِ، وَاحْتَالَ فِي مَشْيِيهِ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبَانٌ.
“He who is presumptuous and walks proudly shall find Allah angry with him when he meets Him.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ مِمَّنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ يَجُرُّ إِزَارَهُ مِنَ الْخِيَلَاءِ إِذْ خَسَفَ اللَّهُ بِهِ الْأَرْضَ، فَهُوَ
يَتَجَلَجَلُ فِيهَا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Once there was a man before your time, who was dragging his clothes, acting proudly, Allah caused him to be swallowed by the earth wherein he will continue to reverberate until Resurrection Day.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ.
“He in whose heart is an atom of arrogance shall never enter the Garden.”

Just then, a man asked, “O Messenger of Allah! A man likes his clothes to look good and his sandals to look good.” So he may blessings and peace be upon him, answered, “Allah is Beautiful, and He loves beauty. Arrogance is to deny the truth.” Meaning repulses and despises others.

Whoever is haughty and vain, despises others and disdains them, he is the loathsome, arrogant person.

Arrogance lies in the heart but has outward signs indicating its presence. Among the signs are:

- love to be given precedence over others,
- behave toward others superciliously,
- like to be placed in front of the gatherings,

- proudly strut in action when walking,
- being annoyed when his words are not accepted at face value even when he is wrong,
- rejecting the truth and advice from others,
- bully the weak and poor among Muslims,
- constantly feel he is right and never wrong,
- praising and lauding oneself,
- vaunting oneself of one's fathers if they happen to be people of religion and virtue,
- boasting of one's lineage.

Boasting of lineage is blameworthy and repulsive. The children of superior people are sometimes afflicted with this when they lack insight and knowledge of the truths of religion. He who vaunts himself of his lineage and his forefathers thereby loses their blessings, for they were never boastful, nor arrogant towards others. Had they been so, their superiority would have been annulled. Once he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ بَطَأَ بِهِ عَمَلُهُ لَمْ يُسْرِعْ بِهِ نَسَبُهُ.

“Whoever is slowed down by his deeds (to achieve a higher status) will not be speeded up by his lineage.”

And the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

يَا فَاطِمَةُ بِنْتُ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَيَا صَفِيَّةَ عَمَّةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ لَا أَعْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا، اشْتَرُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنَ النَّارِ . . .

“O Fatima, daughter of Muhammad! O Safiyya, aunt of the Messenger of Allah! I shall not be available to you with Allah. Ransom yourselves from the Fire...”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا فَضْلَ لِأَحْمَرَ عَلَى أَسْوَدٍ وَلَا لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى أَعْجَمِيٍّ إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى أَنْتُمْ مِنْ آدَمَ وَآدَمُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ.

“There is no superiority for red over black, nor the Arab over the non-Arab, except for fear of Allah. You descend from Adam and Adam is from dust!”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَيَنْتَهِيَنَّ أَقْوَامٌ عَنِ الْفَخْرِ بِآبَائِهِمْ أَوْ لِيَكُونَنَّ أَهْوَنَ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى مِنَ الْجَعَلَانِ،

“Let certain people stop boasting about their fathers or they shall be more insignificant than beetles in the sight of Allah!”

Superiority and nobility are by Allah-fearing, not by lineage, just as Allah, the Exalted says,

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ.

“Verily, the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah are those who fear Allah most.”¹

If a person is exceptional in Allah-fearing, learning and worship then becomes arrogant with others and boasts of his superiority, Allah inevitably thwarts his piety and annuls his acts of worship. How much more so if he is ignorant and confused, yet prides himself of piety and virtue that is not his, but his forefathers? Is that but immense ignorance and hideous foolishness? All good lies in modesty, humility and submission to Allah, Exalted is He. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ تَوَاضَعَ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ تَكَبَّرَ وَضَعَهُ اللَّهُ.

“He who is humble, Allah shall elevate him, but he who is proud, Allah shall abase him.”

To love obscurity and anonymity and detest fame and renown are among the attributes of virtuous believers. Also to be content with a humble place in gatherings, simple clothes and food and all worldly matters. O Believer! Take notice of these and implement them.

Among the worst of ruinous things is ostentation or show off [*riya*]. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, called it the “smaller idolatry” and the “hidden idolatry”.

¹ Surah 49 al Hujurat Verse 13.

The meaning of ostentation [*riya*] is to seek eminence and respect from others using deeds that are meant for the hereafter. Such is the person who prays, fasts, gives charity, goes to pilgrimage, strive for Allah's sake and recite the Quran so that others respect and honour him, or give him their possessions. Such a person is showing off or ostentatious, his works will be rejected, and his striving will fail, whether he is given what he wants or not. Thus Allah, Exalted is He, says,

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

“Whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner.”¹

And the Exalted says,

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ.

“Whoever desires the tilth of the Hereafter, We give an increase in his tilth, and to any that desires the tilth of this world, We grant somewhat thereof, but he has no share or lot in the Hereafter.”²

And the Exalted says,

قَوْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ. وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ.

“So to the lowest hell be the worshippers who are neglectful of their prayers, who want to be seen but refuse to assist a neighbour in need.”³

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَنَا أَعْنَى الْأَغْنِيَاءِ عَنِ الشَّرِكِ فَمَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا أَشْرَكَ فِيهِ غَيْرِي فَأَنَا مِنْهُ بَرِيءٌ، وَنَصِيبِي لِشَرِيكِي.

“Allah, the Exalted said, “I am less in need of associates than anyone else. Therefore, he who does something in which he associates another with Me, I shall disown him, and My share shall go to My presumed partners.”

¹ Surah 18 Al Kahf Verse 110.

² Surah 42 Ash Shura Verse 20.

³ Surah 107 Al Maaun Verse 4-7.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ صَامَ يُرَائِي فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ، مَنْ صَلَّى يُرَائِي فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ، مَنْ تَصَدَّقَ يُرَائِي فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ.

“Whoever prays showing off, he has associated (the deed to other than Allah), he who fasts showing off, he has associated and he who gives charity showing off, he has associated.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ طَلَبَ الدُّنْيَا بِعَمَلِ الْآخِرَةِ طَمَسَ اللَّهُ وَجْهَهُ، وَمَهَقَ ذِكْرَهُ، وَأَثَبَتْ أَسْمُهُ فِي النَّارِ.

“Whoever seeks this world with works of the hereafter, Allah will blot out his face, obliterate the memory of him and write him down to be admitted into the Fire.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ أَحْسَنَ الصَّلَاةَ حَيْثُ يَرَاءُ النَّاسُ، وَأَسَاءَ الصَّلَاةَ حَيْثُ يَخْلُو، فَتِلْكَ اسْتِهَانَةٌ إِسْتِهَانَ بِهَا رَبُّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

“Whoever prays well when observed by others but on his own prays badly, he is contemptuous of his Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He.”

Ostentation [*riya*] is ruinous, its perils are great, and to beware of it is an obligatory duty. The worst kind of ostentation is to have no other motive in performing acts of worship but to be seen by others. Thus, one has to make sure one is being observed. A lesser degree is to intend to draw nearer to Allah, Exalted is He, and obtain recompense in the hereafter, yet still wish to be seen by others to obtain their praises and respect. The first kind is more repulsive, more conducive to failure, and more dangerous. However, the second is also repulsive, annuls reward, and is not far from being sinful and deserving of punishment.

The believer must strive to expel ostentation from within himself and to have no other intention or aim in all his acts of obedience or worship but to draw nearer to Allah and obtain recompense in the hereafter. Only thus will he be free from ostentation and safe from its evil and afflictions, Allah willing. Whenever he is worried about its evil, he should conceal his works and perform them in private where no one can see him, and this is more cautious and safer. To conceal works is

unreservedly better, even for him who is not worried about ostentation, except for him who has achieved perfection of character and sincerity and hopes that those who observe his works might emulate him.

Some good deeds can only be done in public, for instance acquiring knowledge and teaching, praying in congregation, pilgrimage, Jihad, and so on, He who is anxious lest he falls prey to ostentation while doing any of these things should nevertheless not abandon them, but perform them, while striving to expel ostentation from within himself, and seeking Allah's help.

﴿وَهُوَ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ الْمُعِين﴾

For He is the best Ally and the best Helper.

Resentful Envy [*Hasad*]

Among ruinous thing are also resenting other Muslims, wishing them evil, harbouring enmity, deceit and rancour, lacking compassion and solicitude, and thinking ill of them. All these are ruinous attributes.

As for resentful envy [*hasad*], it is enough disparagement and repulsiveness that Allah, Exalted is He, enjoined upon His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, to seek protection from the evil of the resentful in the same way He enjoined upon him to seek protection from the evil of the Devil.

The Exalted says,

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ.

“And from the mischief of the envious one as he practices envy.”¹

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْحَسَدَ، فَإِنَّ الْحَسَدَ يَأْكُلُ الْحَسَنَاتِ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ الْحَطَبَ.

“Beware of resentful envy, for resentful envy consumes good deeds just as fire consumes firewood.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَجْتَمِعُ فِي جَوْفِ عَبْدٍ الْإِيمَانُ وَالْحَسَدُ.

¹ Surah 113 Al Falaq Verse 5.

“Faith and resentful envy cannot be together in the heart of a servant.”

The above is quite severe, so reflect upon it.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا تَحَاسَدُوا وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا . . .

“Do not Envy, do not hate, and do not make an enemy of one another.”

Resentful envy is for one to feel constriction and discomfort in one’s breast and heart, and aversion to see Allah bestow a favour, whether of this world or the next, upon one of His servants, to wish for him to lose it, and sometimes to wish so even if it will not end up with oneself, and this is extreme wickedness. He who observes in himself something of this resentful envy must detest and conceal it, and never manifest it by word or deed, that he may be saved from its evil.

In a hadith narration, it stated that “Three are inevitably present in my community: envy, thinking ill of others and belief in evil omens.” A man asked him, “How to avoid them?” and he answered, “Whenever you are envious, ask for forgiveness; whenever you think ill of others, do not inquire; and whenever you fear an evil omen, proceed.” Meaning proceeds with what you intend to do and let not the evil omen deter you.

Should the envious person act in a manner opposite to that which should have been induced by envy, should he praise the person he envies, and honour and assist him, this would be virtuous on his part and would be one of the most effective remedies for removing or weakening envy.

There is no harm in envy which is free of resentment [*ghibta*], which is to wish to obtain, by the grace of Allah, the same blessing you observe your brother enjoy without desiring him to lose it. If this is a religious blessing, such as knowledge or acts of worship, it is praiseworthy. If it is a worldly blessing, such as money or lawful social eminence, it is permissible.

As for wishing any Muslim evil and harbouring deceit, enmity or rancour for them, it is sufficient rebuke to know that he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبُّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ.

“None of you will have believed until he comes to love for his brother what he loves for himself.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“He who deceives the Muslims is not of them.” مَنْ غَشَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَلَيْسَ مِنْهُمْ.

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنْ قَدَرْتَ أَنْ تُصْبِحَ وَتَمْسِيَ وَلَيْسَ فِي قَلْبِكَ غِشٌّ لِأَحَدٍ فَأَفْعَلْ، وَذَلِكَ مِنْ سُنَّتِي.

“If you can live through every morning and evening harbouring in your heart no deceit for Muslims, then do so, for it is part of my Sunnah.”

Lack of Compassion

As for lack of mercy and compassion for Muslims, it indicates the hardness of the heart, harshness and coarseness all of which are repulsive and blameworthy. Then he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

ارْحَمْ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ، اِرْحَمْ تُرْحَمْ، إِنَّمَا يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ مَنْ عِبَادِهِ الرَّحَمَاءُ.

“Have compassion on those on earth and those in heaven will have compassion on you. Have mercy, and you will find mercy. Allah shows mercy on those of His servants who show mercy.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا تُنَزَعِ الرَّحْمَةُ إِلَّا مِنْ شَقِيٍّ.

Whoever finds in his heart no compassion for Muslims in general, but especially for those suffering hardships and afflictions, or those who are weak and poor, this is because his heart is hard, faith weak and he is distant from his Lord.

Thinking evil of Muslims is also blameworthy and repulsive. He, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

حَصَلَتَانِ لَيْسَ فَوْقَهُمَا شَيْءٌ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ: حُسْنُ الظَّنِّ بِاللَّهِ، حُسْنُ الظَّنِّ لِعِبَادِ اللَّهِ.

وَحَصَلَتَانِ لَيْسَ فَوْقَهُمَا شَيْءٌ مِنَ الشَّرِّ: سُوءُ الظَّنِّ بِاللَّهِ، سُوءُ الظَّنِّ لِعِبَادِ اللَّهِ.

“There were two good attributes that were unsurpassed by any other good, thinking well of Allah and thinking well of the servants of Allah; and two evil attributes that were unsurpassed by any other evil, thinking ill of Allah and thinking ill of the servants of Allah.”

The meaning of thinking ill of Muslims is to think ill of their words and deeds even on the surface appears good, by thinking of them other than what it appears to indicate. It also means to give an evil interpretation to words and deeds as it appears of which is equivocal, thus bearing interpretation in both directions. This second kind is not as bad as the first. Thinking well of Muslims is at the opposite of this. It means that their words and deeds as it appears good are accepted as good, while those which are open to interpretation are also taken to be good.

﴿فَاعْمَلْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ جُهْدَكَ وَاسْتَغْنِ بِاللَّهِ تَعَالَىٰ﴾

Strive to conform to this and seek Allah the Exalted's help.

﴿وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

Success is only from Allah.

Love of this World and Greed

Among major acts that ruin a person is to love this world and desire it, to be very eager and avid for it, to love eminence and wealth and be very greedy for them, and to be avaricious and niggardly. These are all ruinous attributes and blameworthy traits. He who loves this world, desires it, and is greedy and avid for it, exposes himself to grave dangers and severe threats from Allah. Allah Exalted is He, says,

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزَيَّنَّتْهَا نُوفٌ إِلَيْهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِيهَا وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يُبْخَسُونَ.
أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارُ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوا فِيهَا وَبَاطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ.

“Those who desire the life of the present and its glitter, to them, we shall pay (the price of) their deeds therein, without diminution. They are those for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire: vain are the designs they frame therein and of no effect and the deeds that they do!”¹

¹ Surah 11 Hud Verse 15-16.

And the Exalted says,

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلاَهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا. وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا.

“If any do wish for the transitory things of this life, We readily grant them such things as We will, to such person as We will: in the end have We provided Hell for them: they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected. Those who do wish for the things of the Hereafter, and strive therefor with all due striving, and have Faith, they are the ones whose striving is acceptable to Allah.”¹

In encouraging His servants to detach themselves from this world reminding them how perishable and evanescent it is the Exalted says,
وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا.

“Set forth to them the similitude of the life of this world: It is like the rain which we send down from the skies: the earth’s vegetation absorbs it, but soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds do scatter: it is only Allah who prevails over all things.”²

And the Exalted says,

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ.

“You should all know that the life of this world is but amusement and play, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, in rivalry among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight the hearts of the tillers; soon it withers; you will see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe for the devotees of wrong.

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 18-19.

² Surah 18 Al Kahf Verse 45.

Forgiveness from Allah and His Good Pleasure for the devotees of Allah. And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception?”¹

And the Exalted says,

فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ. وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا. فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ.

“Then, for such as had transgressed all bounds, and had preferred the life of this world, the Abode will be Hell-Fire.”²

The Prophet of Allah, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا رَأْسُ كُلِّ خَطِيئَةٍ.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَوْ كَانَتْ الدُّنْيَا تَرَنُّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ جَنَاحَ بَعُوضَةٍ مَا سَقَىٰ كَافِرًا مِنْهَا شَرْبَةً مَّاءٍ.

“If this world weighed as much as the wing of a fly in the sight of Allah, He would never have given a disbeliever a sip of its water.”

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الدُّنْيَا دَارٌ مَنْ لَا دَارَ لَهُ، وَمَالٌ مَنْ لَا مَالَ لَهُ، وَلَهَا يَجْمَعُ مَنْ لَا عَقْلَ لَهُ.

“This world is the home of he who has no home, the wealth of he who has no wealth and where those devoid of intelligence is gathering.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الدُّنْيَا مَلْعُونَةٌ، مَلْعُونٌ مَا فِيهَا إِلَّا ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ، وَعَالِمًا أَوْ مُتَعَلِّمًا.

This world is accursed and accursed is all that is in it, save the remembrance of Allah, a scholar, or a student.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ أَخَذَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا فَوْقَ مَا يَكْفِيهِ أَخَذَ حَتْفَهُ وَهُوَ لَا يَشْعُرُ.

He, who takes from this world more than his bare necessities will also be taking his ruin unaware.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لِيَكُنْ بَلَاغُ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا كَرَادِ الرَّكْبِ.

Let each of you take no more from this world than a traveller’s provision.

¹ Surah 57 Al Hadid Verse 20.

² Surah 79 An Naziaat Verse 37-39.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 مَنْ أَصْبَحَ وَهَمَّهُ الدُّنْيَا شَتَّتَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرَهُ، وَفَرَّقَ عَلَيْهِ ضِعَّتَهُ، وَجَعَلَ فَقْرَهُ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ،
 وَلَمْ يَأْتِهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَا كُتِبَ لَهُ.

“He who is intent on the Hereafter, Allah makes him inwardly wealthy, gathers for him his affairs, and the world comes to him subdued; but he who is intent on this world, Allah scatters his affairs, disperses his property, and places his poverty right between his eyes, yet only that will come to him that has been pre-ordained.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 الزَّهَادَةُ فِي الدُّنْيَا تُرِيحُ الْقُلُوبَ وَالْبَدَنَ، وَالرَّغْبَةُ فِي الدُّنْيَا تُكَثِّرُ الْهَمَّ وَالْحُزْنَ،
 وَالْبَطَالَةُ تُقَسِّي الْقُلُوبَ.

“Detachment from this world rests the heart and the body, while desire in this world increase worries and sorrow, and idleness harden the heart.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 نَجَا أَوَّلُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ بِالزُّهْدِ وَالْيَقِينِ، وَسَيَهْلِكُ آخِرُهَا بِالْجِرْصِ وَطُولِ الْأَمَلِ.

“This community were saved firstly by detachment [zuhud] and certainty [yaqin], while the last shall perish through greed and long hopes.”

There are innumerable verses, hadiths and other traditions dispraising both the world, those who love and desire it, as well as those who are greedy for it. Scholars may Allah have mercy on them, both early and latecomers have written profusely on this.

By this world is meant every pleasure and appetite on the face of the earth, as well as everything that the ego lusts after, is inclined toward and greedy for. Allah brought the origins of all this together when He, Exalted is He, says,

رُئِيَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ
 وَالْحَيْلِ الْمُسَوِّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا.

“Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: Women and sons; Heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded for blood and excellence; and wealth of cattle and plantations. Such are the possessions of this world’s life.”¹

Therefore, he who loves and desires all this, is greedy for it, and has no other wish but to enjoy it, he is one of those who love the world and desire it. If he becomes so overwhelmed by such feelings that he no longer cares whether he acquires worldly things in a lawful or unlawful manner, or becomes so occupied with striving for them greedily as to neglect those acts of obedience that Allah has imposed upon him, and slips into that which Allah has forbidden, then he has fully deserved the punishments that those who love and desire this world are threatened with. His fate is extremely precarious unless Allah rescues him with repentance before he dies and leaves this world.

Love for Eminence and Wealth

As for the love of eminence or positions and wealth, and greed for them, they are extremely blameworthy. Allah, Exalted is He, says, تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

“That Home of the Hereafter We shall give to those who intend not high-handedness or mischief on earth: and the end is only for the righteous.”²

And the Exalted says,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ.

O you who believe! Let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. If any do this, the loss is their own.”³

And the Exalted says,

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ.

“Your riches and your children may be but a trial.”⁴

¹ Surah 3 ala Imran Verse 14.

² Surah 28 Al Qasas Verse 83.

³ Surah 63 Munaafiqun Verse 9.

⁴ Surah 64 at Taghabun Verse 15.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 مَا ذَنْبَانِ جَائِعَانِ أُرْسِلَا فِي زُرْبَةٍ عَنْهُمُ بَاقْسَدَ لَهَا مِنْ حُبِّ الْمَالِ وَالشَّرَفِ فِي دِينِ الرَّجُلِ
 الْمُسْلِمِ.

“Two hungry wolves let loose among sheep will cause no more destruction than the love of eminence and money to a man’s religion.”

He who is very greedy for eminence, wealth, the pursuit of rank and respect in the hearts of others exposes himself to numerous ailments, such as arrogance, ostentation, affectation, abandoning humility when faced with the truth and its people, disliking anonymity, and so on.

The hadith states, إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ مَنْ عِبَادِهِ الْأَتْقِيَاءَ الْأَخْفِيَاءَ الْأَبْرِيَاءَ.
 “Indeed, Allah loves the righteous pious, Allah-fearing and obscure.”

Another hadith narrates,

رُبَّ أَشْعَثَ أَغْبَرَ ذِي طَمَرَيْنِ لَا يُؤْبَهُ لَهُ لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لَا بَرَهُ.

“It may be that a man unkempt, dusty, dressed in two worn-out clothes, to whom nobody pays attention when he beseeches Allah, He grants him his request.”

He whose greed for money is strong exposes himself to immense dangers and major afflictions unless Allah protects and rescues him by His mercy. That which is blameworthy in terms of love and greed for eminence and money is that these are powerful and excessive, so that one will strive to gratify them using in the process whatever means he finds necessary, whether permissible or not, and becomes too occupied to free himself to worship Allah and remember Him, as happens to many who succumb to temptation and are heedless of Allah, Exalted is He.

But those who pursue these with the right intention of using them as a help for the hereafter, to protect their religion and their own selves from the injustice of the unjust and from the need for others, who are not too distracted to worship Allah the Exalted and remember Him, who are not abandoned by their fear of Allah and their piety, then there is no harm in that and no blame, Allah willing.

However, lack of greed for eminence and wealth and forsaking desire for them are safer, more cautious, nearer to Allah-fearing and more in line with the pattern of the virtuous predecessors.

Avarice and Miserliness

As for avarice and miserliness, they are repulsive and ruinous, Allah, Exalted is He, says, وَمَنْ يُوقِ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ.

“And whoever protected and saved himself from the covetousness greed of his soul; they are the ones that achieve prosperity.”¹

And the Exalted says,

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخِلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“And let not those who covetously withhold of the gifts which Allah have given them of His Grace think that it is good for them, on the contrary it will be the worse for them. Soon shall the things which they greedily withheld be tied to their necks like a collar on the Resurrection Day.”²

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

اتَّقُوا الشُّحَّ، فَإِنَّ شُحَّ أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ حَمَلَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْ سَفَكُوا دِمَائَهُمْ وَاسْتَحْلَوْا مَحَارِمَهُمْ.
“Beware of greed, for it has ruined those who were before you. It induced them to spill blood and took what is forbidden.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْبَخِيلُ بَعِيدٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ، بَعِيدٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، بَعِيدٌ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ، قَرِيبٌ مِنَ النَّارِ.
“The miser is distant from Allah, distant from the Garden, distant from people, but near to the Fire.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

السَّخَاءُ شَجَرَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَأَغْصَانُهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَمَنْ تَعَلَّقَ بِغُضَنِ مِنْهَا قَادَهُ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، فَلَا يَلِجُ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا سَخِيًّا. وَالْبُحْلُ شَجَرَةٌ فِي النَّارِ وَأَغْصَانُهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا، فَمَنْ تَعَلَّقَ بِغُضَنِ مِنْهَا قَادَهُ إِلَى النَّارِ، فَلَا يَلِجُ النَّارَ إِلَّا بَخِيلًا.

¹ Surah 59 al-Hashr Verse 9.

² Surah 3 ala Imran Verse 180.

“Generosity is a tree in the Heaven, the branches of which extend into this world. He who holds fast to one of its branches, it will lead him to Heaven. None will enter heaven except the generous. While miserliness is a tree in the Hell-Fire, the branches of which extend into this world. He who holds fast to one of its branches, it will lead him to the Hell-Fire. None will enter the Hell Fire unless he is a miser.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَلَا وَإِنَّ كُلَّ جَوَادٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، حَتَمٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَا بِهِ مَفِيلٌ. أَلَا وَإِنَّ كُلَّ بَخِيلٍ فِي النَّارِ، حَتَمٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَا بِهِ كَفِيلٌ.

“Indeed, every generous person is sure to end up in the Garden, this was determined by Allah and that I am the guarantor of this; whereas every miser is sure to end up in the Fire, this was determined by Allah, and again I am the guarantor for this.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الْجَاهِلُ السَّخِيُّ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْعَالِمِ الْبَخِيلِ.

“An ignorant generous man is more loved by Allah than a miser learned.”

You now know how blameworthy and repulsive greed and miserliness are. Greed is extreme covetousness. As a scholar, may Allah have mercy on him, once said, “It is for a man to be intent on acquiring that which is in other people’s possession.”

Avarice or miserliness is for a man to wish to retain what he already has. Its maximum is to abstain from settling one’s obligations, such as zakat, and so on. He who has reached this point is the true miser who thus exposes himself to the censure and threats concerning miserliness. As for he who abstains from spending in acts of benevolence and good works of which he has the means, his condition is not as bad as the first, but he is still a miser, for he prefers to hold on to his money rather than expend it in that which is more elevating and beneficial to him with his Lord in the way of lofty degrees and good deeds that will subsist in the hereafter. So long as a person prefers keeping his money to spending it in what pleases Allah, he is never free from some miserliness.

He becomes generous and liberal only when expending his money in ways pleasing to Allah becomes preferable and more pleasing to him than withholding it. You should know this and act accordingly may Allah take charge of your guidance.

Self-Deception

Among the acts that ruin a person is self-deception, which is for a person to deceive his soul and present things to it in a manner that is untrue. This is caused by lack of religious insight, lack of knowledge of religion, ignorance of the ailments that affect works and the snares of the Devil, being overwhelmed by the ego's passions and committing oneself to its vain hopes and delusions. Allah, Exalted is He, says, warning His servants against vanity and self-deception,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ.

“O men! Certainly, the promise of Allah is true. Let not the life of this world deceive you, nor let the Chief Deceiver deceive you about Allah.”¹

And in describing certain self-deceivers, the Exalted says,

الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا.

“Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works?”²

And the Exalted says,

وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرْتَبَّصُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْأَمَانِيُّ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ.

“But you led yourselves into temptation; looked forward to our ruin; doubted Allah's promise; and false desires deceived you; until Allah's command came. And the Deceiver deceived you in respect of Allah.”³

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ، وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ أَتْبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا وَتَمَتَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ الْأَمَانِي.

¹ Surah 35 Fatir Verse 5.

² Surah 18 al Kahf Verse 104.

³ Surah 57 Al Hadid Verse 14.

“The sagacious is he who manage his soul and to work for that which comes after death. The feeble is he who follows his soul [*nafs*] in pursuit of his passions, then harbours vain hopes in Allah.”

There are many kinds of self-deception and many kinds of self-deceivers, whether among the obedient or the disobedient. One kind of self-deception in people of obedience is to seek knowledge while postponing works, then justify this with textual evidence detailing the merits of knowledge and of seeking it, while ignoring the dispraise and severe threats proffered against those who fail to act in conformity with their knowledge.

Another is to learn, then teach, but for the sake of eminence and greed for what may be obtained from people. Such a person thinks he is learning and teaching for the sake of Allah, but never passes his self under scrutiny and never compares his ego with the states of the sincere.

Another is to perform abundant ritual prayers, fasts and good deeds, then admire oneself, confine one’s perception to one’s power and ability, forgetting Allah’s favour in guiding and granting one success. Self-admiration annuls good deeds. One may also fall into ostentation and seek to be highly regarded by other people, yet still, think he is sincere and desirous of drawing nearer to Allah. Abu Darda, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “It is better to sleep at night and not fasting in the day of those who understand, how they outstrip the vigils of fools and their fasts! An atom’s weight from a person of certitude and Allah-fearing is better than mountains of works from the vain.”

As for self-deception on the part of the sinful, one kind is for a person to sin, then repent and ask forgiveness with the tongue, without knowledge of the conditions of repentance and how to make it valid yet think that he has repented and been forgiven.

Another is to sin abundantly and persistently, fail in one’s duties, then justify oneself using predestination as an argument, claiming that one is deprived of all choice, as well as of the ability to resist that which

has been preordained, and this is an immense self-deception. He who says so is a heretic and does not belong to *Ahlul Sunnah*.

Another is to harbour hopes of forgiveness, even as one is failing to obey commands and avoid forbidden things. Some sinful and neglectful people say, “Allah is in no need of us or our deeds. He is neither harmed by sins nor does He profit from good deeds.” These are words of truth but deliberately quoted out of context. It is the Devil who has inspired the heart of that vain person with them, then brought them out of his mouth, to cut him off from forgiveness and from striving for it as Allah commands.

Another is for certain sinful and confused people to depend on the virtue of their learned and virtuous fathers and ancestors, but without emulating any of their good characters, deeds, or words, and this is blameworthy self-deception and flagrant foolishness.

Another is for certain sinners to visit the virtuous, serve them, and think well of them, yet hold back from every kind of good they see them do, every virtue they have, and from their pattern of constant obedience to Allah.

Earlier we said, the different kinds of self-deception are numerous, and only those will be saved from them who return to Allah and depend only on His favour and generosity, together with exercising firmness and caution, determination in obeying Him, resolution in earnestly worshipping Him, avoiding disobedience and thanking Him for this, while confessing their shortcomings in fulfilling the least of His rights, remaining humble and needy to the utmost, constantly imploring and beseeching Him, and constantly asking for forgiveness, night and day.

﴿وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ﴾

My success is only from God,

﴿عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ﴾

Upon Him do I depend and to Him do I submit.

Chapter Fourteen

Actions and Deeds that Safe

There are numerous safety issues that the heart must be embellished with and acquire as its own attributes. Briefly, we shall discuss some of the more essential and important ones, Allah willing.

Repentance [*Taubah*]

One of the greatest of saving action is repentance to Allah the Exalted from all sins, Allah, August and Majestic is He has commanded His servants to repent, encouraged them to do so and promised them His acceptance.

The Exalted, says, وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ.

“And repent to Allah, all together, O believers, that you may succeed.”¹

And the Exalted says, يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا.

“O believers! Repent to Allah, a sincere repentance.”²

And the Exalted says, إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُنْطَهِّرِينَ.

“Indeed, Allah loves those who turn to Him repenting and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.”³

¹ Surah 24 an Noor Verse 31.

² Surah 66 at Tahrim Verse 8.

³ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 222.

And the Exalted says,

فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

“Thus if whoever repents after his crime, and amends his conduct, Allah turn to him in forgiveness; for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”¹

And the Exalted says,

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ.

“He is the One that accepts repentance from His Servants and forgives sins and evil deeds: and He knows all that you do.”²

The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ.

“He who has repented from sin is as if he who has never sinned.

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ بِالنَّهَارِ لِيَتُوبَ مُسِيءُ اللَّيْلِ وَيَبْسُطُ يَدَهُ اللَّيْلُ لِيَتُوبَ مُسِيءُ النَّهَارِ، حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا.

“Verily Allah extends His hand by day to those who has done evil by night who might repent, and He extends His hand by night to those who has done evil in the day who might repent, (Allah continue to do so) until the sun rises from where it sets.”

And he may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him said,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ تَوْبُوا إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَمُوتُوا، وَبَادِرُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ الصَّالِحَةِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُشْغَلُوا، وَصَلُّوا الَّذِي بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ رَبِّكُمْ بِكَثْرَةٍ ذَكَرْكُمْ لَهُ.

“O people! Repent to Allah before you die and hasten to good deeds before you become too occupied, and join that which is between you and your Lord by remembering Him in abundance.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَقْبَلُ تَوْبَةَ الْعَبْدِ مَا لَمْ يُعْرِغْ.

¹ Surah 5 al Maidah Verse 39.

² Surah 42 ash Shura Verse 25.

“Verify, Allah, the Exalted, accepts repentance from a servant so long as he has not breath his last breath.”

Until such time, that is, as his spirit reaches his throat as he is dying.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“He who repents, Allah relents toward him.” مَنْ تَابَ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ.

You should now know, may Allah have mercy on you, that repentance is not for a servant to say, “I ask Allah’s forgiveness, I repent to Allah,” without remorse in his heart and without desisting from sin. The scholars, may Allah have mercy on them, have mentioned the conditions necessary for repentance, without which it cannot be valid. These are three:

1. To feel remorse in the heart for previous sins.
2. To refrain from sin; which means that one cannot repent from sin while still committing it.
3. To resolve never to relapse into sin for the rest of one’s life.

These three conditions are necessary for sins which are between the servant and his Lord. When the sin is between the servant and other servants, a fourth is added. To explain: If he has injured another man, whether in his person, honour or property, he must compensate him by allowing him to exact the legal retaliatory measures in case of personal injury; by returning his property in case where the wrong occurred; or by asking forgiveness if it is his honour which has been affected. He must strive to the utmost to accomplish this. As for he who has repented from neglecting such obligatory devotions as ritual prayers and fasts, he should requite them as much as time and circumstance will allow.

Once the servant has repented from his sins in the manner described above, he should maintain himself between hope and fear: hope that his Lord will accept his repentance, by His favour and generosity, and fear that he may not, since he may not have repented in the manner that Allah has commanded him to do, and is thus not considered by Him to have repented.

It is incumbent upon believers to guard themselves thoroughly against all sins, for in them lies Allah's wrath and loathing, and furthermore, they are the cause of all the afflictions and catastrophes that befall people both in this world and the next. Should a person fall into sin, he must repent to Allah immediately and strive not to persist or feel comfortable with it.

It is incumbent upon every believer should repent continuously to Allah, renewing his repentance at every moment and in every situation, for sins are numerous, there are minor as well as major ones, manifest as well as hidden ones, and sins that the servant is aware of as well as others he is not. He may be asked to account for not making an effort to learn whether certain acts are sinful or not, as well as their having preliminaries and signs that, had he known them, might have allowed him to do something about them.

Seeking Forgiveness

It is very important to ask for forgiveness in abundance, for Allah so commands and encourages. Then the Exalted says,

وَأَسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

“Ask Allah's forgiveness, Allah is Forgiving, Compassionate.”¹

And the Exalted said to His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him,

وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لِدَنبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ.

“Ask forgiveness for your sins and the men and women believers.”²

In describing those of His servants who behave with excellence,

The Exalted says,

وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ.

“And in the hour of early dawn, they were praying for Forgiveness;”³

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ لَزِمَ الْإِسْتِغْفَارَ، جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنْ كُلِّ هِمٍّ فَرْجًا، وَمِنْ كُلِّ ضِيقٍ مَخْرَجًا، وَرَزَقَهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ.

¹ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 199.

² Surah 49 Muhammad Verse 19.

³ Surah 51 Adh Dhariyat Verse 18.

“He who keeps to asking forgiveness, Allah shall grant him relief from every anxiety, a way out of every difficulty and provision from whence he does not expect it.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

طُوِيَ لِمَنْ وُجِدَ فِي صَحِيفَتِهِ اسْتَعْفَارًا كَثِيرًا.

“Blessed is he in whose record is found many requests for forgiveness.”

To realise the merits of asking forgiveness, its profits, and usefulness, it should suffice you to be aware of His saying, Exalted is He, وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ. وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ.

“But Allah was not going to send them a penalty while you were amongst them; nor was He going to send it while they could ask for pardon.”¹

And the Exalted informing about His Prophet Noah, may peace be upon him, say,

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا. يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا. وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا.

“Then I said, “Ask forgiveness from your Lord; for He is Oft-Forgiving”; He will send rain to you in abundance; Give you increase in wealth and sons; and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers (of flowing water).”²

Surely, repentance and asking forgiveness are treasures of goodness. They are among the greatest gates to good deeds and blessings, and the most effective means to all good things in this world and the next.

Therefore, may Allah have mercy on you, you must keep to repentance and asking for forgiveness, day and night. The Devil, may Allah curse him, deceives the fools among Muslims by saying, “How can you repent when you well know that you will not uphold your repentance? How can you repent then relapse into sin?” He will keep on

¹ Surah 8 al Anfal Verse 33.

² Surah 71 Nuh Verse 10-12.

whispering such doubts to them. So, let the Muslim beware of him, not be deceived, and not be taken by his falsehoods and trickeries. He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا أَصْرَ مَنْ اسْتَغْفَرَ وَلَوْ عَادَ فِي الْيَوْمِ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً.

“He who asks forgiveness is considered not persisting in sin even though should he relapse into sin seventy times a day.”

The servant must repent then ask his Lord to assist him and make him steadfast. If his ego defeats him, and he relapses into sin, let him defeat it in turn by repeating his repentance.

﴿وَاللَّهُ الْمُوفِّقُ وَالْمُعِينُ﴾

It is Allah who grants success and assistance.

Hope and Fear

Among saving things are hope in Allah and fear of Him. Both are noble stations which Allah has attributed to His Prophets, Messengers, and those among the virtuous believers who followed them with excellence. He, Exalted is He, says,

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا.

“Those whom they call upon do desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord, even those who are nearest: they hope for His Mercy and fear His Wrath: for the Wrath of thy Lord is something to beware of.”¹

And the Exalted says,

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ.

“They were ever quick in emulation in good works; they used to call on Us with love and reverence, and humble themselves before Us.”²

And the Exalted says,

¹ Surah 17 al Israa Verse 57.

² Surah 21 al Anbiyaa Verse 90.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ.
 “Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought, strove and struggled in the path of Allah, they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah, and Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”¹

The Exalted says,

وَذَكِّرَ الَّذِينَ لَّمْ يَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ أَنَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَنَّهُمْ مِنَ السَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُونَ.

“And a reminder for those who are mindful of their duties to the Lord. Those who fear their Lord in their most secret thoughts, and in matters of the unseen and who hold the Hour (of Judgment) in awe.”²

And the Exalted says,

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجَلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ.

“And those who dispense their charity with their hearts full of fear, because they will return to their Lord.”³

The Messenger of Allah may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said, . . .

“Allah, Exalted is He, said, “I am as My servant thinks of Me, and I am with him whenever he remembers Me. . .”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ، إِنَّكَ مَا دَعَوْتَنِي وَرَجَوْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا كَانَ مِنْكَ وَلَا أُبَالِي، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ لَوْ بَلَغَتْ ذُنُوبُكَ عَنَانَ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ اسْتَغْفَرْتَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَكَ، يَا ابْنَ آدَمَ إِنَّكَ لَوْ أَتَيْتَنِي بِقُرَابِ الْأَرْضِ خَطَايَا ثُمَّ لَقِيتَنِي لَا تَشْرِكُ بِي شَيْئًا لَأَتَيْتُكَ بِقُرَابِهَا مَغْفِرَةً.

“Allah, the Exalted say, “O Son of Adam! You will never call upon Me and hope in Me and not be forgiven by Me, whatever you may have done, and I shall care little. O Son of Adam! Were your sins to reach up to the clouds in the sky, then you ask My forgiveness, I shall forgive you. O

¹ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 218.

² Surah 21 al Anbiyaa Verse 48-49.

³ Surah 23 al Mu'minin Verse 60.

Son of Adam! Were you to come to Me with sins to fill the earth, but meet Me associating nothing with Me, I shall meet you with as much forgiveness.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him said,
 قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: وَعِزَّتِي، لَا أَجْمَعُ لِعَبْدِي خَوْفَيْنِ وَلَا أَمْنَيْنِ، فَإِنْ هُوَ خَافَنِي فِي الدُّنْيَا أَمِنْتُهُ
 يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، فَإِنْ هُوَ أَمِنَنِي فِي الدُّنْيَا أَحَفَّتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

“Allah, Exalted is He says, “By My eminence! I shall never subject My servant to two states of fears or two-state at peace or secure. If he fears Me in this world, I shall make him secure on Resurrection Day, but if he feels secure in this world, I shall cause him to fear on Resurrection Day.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,
 “رَأْسُ الْحِكْمَةِ مَخَافَةُ اللَّهِ. “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of Allah.”

He may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, once visited a young man who was dying. He asked him, “How do you feel?” He replied, “I fear my sins and hope for mercy from my Lord.” He, may blessings and peace be upon him said, “These two never unite in the heart of a servant in such a situation without Allah granting him what he hopes for and securing him from what he fears.”

You should know that fear is a rebuke that restrains people from sins and contraventions, while hope is a leader that leads the servant to acts of obedience and conformity. He who is not rebuked by his fear from disobeying Allah, August and Majestic is He nor led by his hope to obey Him, both his hope and fear are but ineffective ruminations of the soul that are of no consequence, for they have failed to lead to their intended goal and benefit.

It is better for the upright believer to remain between fear and hope so that they are like the wings of the bird or the pans of the scales. The Prophet may Allah blessings and peace be upon him said,
 لَوْ وُزِنَ خَوْفُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَرَجَاؤُهُ لَاتَّذَلَا.

“Were the fear of the believer and his hope to be weighed, they would balance each other.”

But for the believer who mixes good with evil deeds and is afraid he might neglect acts of obedience or commit sins, it is better and more appropriate for him to remain fearful most of the time, for fear restrains the ego and rebukes it from its transgressions and unruliness. He whose ego is strong and whose lusts are overpowering, but who nevertheless remains hopeful in forgiveness most of the time, maybe led by his hope to his ruin, for whenever he reminds his inciting-to-evil soul of the immensity of Allah’s mercy and how He easily overlooks sins, he grows bolder in transgressing Allah’s limits, farther away from his obedience and increasingly sinful. Thus, unaware that he will perish, and this has indeed happened to many common Muslims who have been wont to deceive themselves concerning Allah. This kind of hope is but false hope and self-deception. It bears no resemblance whatsoever to praiseworthy hope, for the latter leads the servant to remain obedient to Allah and behave in such a manner as to please Him. So let the believer beware of this kind of hope, for it is but a lure from the Devil and an evil which he passes as a good. However, when a person is nearing death, it is better for him to be full of hope and of thinking well of Allah, whatever his prior condition had been. He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَا يَمُوتُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يُحْسِنُ الظَّنَّ بِاللَّهِ.

“Let none of you dies except thinking well of Allah.”

Let the believer beware of both extremes: Feeling secure from Allah’s plan deceptions on the one hand or despairing of His mercy on the other. The Exalted says,

فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ.

“None feel secure from Allah’s plan except those doomed to ruin!”¹

The Exalted also says,

وَمَنْ يَقْنَطُ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ.

“And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, but such as go astray?”²

¹ Surah 7 Al Araaf Verse 99.

² Surah 15 al Hijr Verse 56.

For a person to feel secure from Allah's ruse is to have so much hope and so little fear of Him as to think it highly unlikely that He will chastise and torment him.

As for despair, it is to have so much fear and so little hope in Allah as to feel it highly unlikely to be shown mercy and forgiven.

Both are major sins, so beware of them. O believer does remain between fear and hope. Do not deceive yourself concerning your Lord and do not be too bold with Him, for your Lord is swift in chastisement, but He is also Forgiving and Compassionate.

Patience

Among the greatest of saving actions are to bear Allah's trials with patience, receive His favours with gratitude, and detach yourself from this world, for it is distracting you away from Him.

As for patience, its merits great and the believer needs all the times and in all circumstances. The injunctions of Allah the Exalted and His Messenger, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, concerning patience are numerous and well known. Allah the Exalted say,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ.
“O believers! Seek help in patience perseverance and prayer, for Allah is with those who have patiently persevere.”¹

And Allah the Exalted says, وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ.
“And give glad news to those who patiently persevere.”²

Allah the Exalted says, وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ.
“And Allah loves those who are firm and steadfast in patience.”³

And Allah the Exalted says to His Prophet upon him be blessings and peace, وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.

“And have patient, your patience is but from Allah.”⁴

¹ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 153.

² Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 155.

³ Surah 3 ala Imran Verse 146.

⁴ Surah 16 an Nahl Verse 127.

وَأَصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا.

And the Exalted says,

“Wait in patience for the Lord’s command. Verily you under Our gaze.”¹

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا.

And the Exalted says,

“And We appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our command, so long as they persevered with patience.”²

إِنَّمَا يُوفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

And the Exalted says,

“Whoever has patience will truly receive a reward without reckoning!”³

The Messenger of Allah said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

مَنْ يَصْبِرْ يُصْبِرْهُ اللَّهُ، وَمَا أُعْطِيَ أَحَدٌ عَطَاءً خَيْرًا وَلَا أَوْسَعَ مِنَ الصَّبْرِ.

“He who has patience, Allah assists him in his patiently persevere. None was ever given a gift better or vaster than patience.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الصَّبْرُ مِعْوَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِ، وَالصَّبْرُ أَمِيرُ جُنُودِ الْمُؤْمِنِ.

“Patience is the mattock (hoe) of the believer, and patience is the commander of the army of the believer as well as.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

فِي الصَّبْرِ عَلَى مَا تَكْرَهُ خَيْرٌ كَثِيرٌ.

“In patiently enduring that which you dislike lies much good.”

It has been reported that Faith has two halves, patience and gratitude. The believer needs patience when calamities strike, in times of hardships, afflictions, or injuries, so that he does not panic, but retains his inner peace and dignity, does not feel anxious and impatient, but returns to Allah humbly and submissively, with supplications and implorations, thinking well of his Lord, in the certain knowledge that Allah the Exalted only afflicted him with this trial because there is much good for him in

¹ Surah 52 at Tur Verse 48.

² Surah 32 as Sajdah Verse 24.

³ Surah 39 az Zumar Verse 10.

it, whether it be raising his degree, increasing his good deeds, or expiating his sins, as many well-known hadiths have stated.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُؤْمِنَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ، وَلَا وَصَبٍ، وَلَا هَمٍّ حَتَّى الشَّوْكَةُ يُشَاكُّهَا إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِ.

“The believer suffers no weariness, hardship, anxiety, sorrow, harm or grief even as little a thing as a thorn that pricks him, without Allah expiating some of his sins.”

A believer will also need much patience when performing his acts of obedience, so as not to neglect them out of indolence and to perform them as Allah commands him to do, with perfect presence, sincerity and lack of showing off, ostentation or affectation in the presence of others. It is natural for the ego to drag its feet in acts of obedience so that the servant needs to impose them upon it with gracious patience.

The believer also needs much patience to refrain from sins and forbidden things, for the ego incites to them and thinks about committing them. He thus needs to restrain it with patience and prevent it from outwardly committing sins and inwardly inclining toward and thinking about them.

The believer also needs much patience to refrain from permissible appetites, those that the ego desires for no other reason than to enjoy the pleasures of this world, when to indulge himself to excess and allow himself free rein in doing so will lead him to fall into the suspect and the forbidden, increase one's desire for the world, even more, arouse one's greed for it, incite to find comfort and give priority to it, while forgetting the hereafter.

You now know, may Allah have mercy on you, how the believer needs patience in all circumstances and times. Keep to it, and you will gain every good and achieve every happiness.

Gratitude

As for gratitude, it is one of the noble stations and lofty degrees.

Allah, Exalted is He, says, **وَأَشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِن كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ.**

“Be grateful for the favours of Allah if it is Him that you worship.”¹

And the Exalted says, **كُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لَهُ.**

“Eat of the Sustenance provided by your Lord, and be grateful to Him.”²

And the Exalted says, **اعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُودَ شُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ.**

“O Family of David show gratitude in work! As only a few of My servants are grateful!”³

And the Exalted says, **وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ.**

“And swiftly shall We reward those that serve us with gratitude.”⁴

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said, “Whoever is given and express gratitude; when is tested and he is patient; when is wronged and he forgives; when committing wrongs, and he asks forgiveness.” Then he upon him be blessings and peace, stopped. The companions asked, “What will he deserve O Messenger of Allah?” He answered, “Those shall have security and are rightly-guided.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لِيَتَّخِذَ أَحَدُكُمْ لِسَانًا ذَاكِرًا وَقَلْبًا شَاكِرًا.

“Let each of you have a remembering tongue and a grateful heart.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَوَّلُ مَنْ يُدْعَى إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ الْحَمَادُونَ. الَّذِينَ يَحْمَدُونَ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَالٍ.

“The first to be summoned to Heaven shall be those who are ever grateful. They are those who thank Allah in all circumstances.”

¹ Surah 16 an Nahl Verse 114.

² Surah 34 Saba Verse 15.

³ Surah 34 Saba Verse 13.

⁴ Surah 3 ala Imran Verse 145.

There are many more narrations and reports on the excellent of expressing gratitude and commanding to do so.

The essence of gratitude is for the servant to know that all the favours in his possession, outward as well as inward, are from Allah, the Exalted, and by His grace and munificence, Transcendent is He.

It is part of gratitude to rejoice in the presence of favours because they are the means to do deeds in Allah's obedience and attain to His proximity.

It is part of gratitude to thank Allah in profusion and praise Him verbally. He may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَوْ أُعْطِيَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي الدُّنْيَا بِأَسْرِهَا، ثُمَّ قَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، كَانَ قَوْلُهُ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، أَفْضَلَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ كُلِّهِ.

“Should a man who is given the entire world say, “*Al-hamdu lillah!*” his saying “*Al-hamdu lillah!*” will equal more than it all.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“*“Al-hamdu lillah!” fills the Scales.*” الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُ الْمِيزَانَ.

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَرْضَى عَنِ الْعَبْدِ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ الْأَكْلَةَ فَيَحْمَدُهُ عَلَيْهَا أَوْ يَشْرَبَ الشَّرْبَةَ فَيَحْمَدُهُ عَلَيْهَا.

“Indeed, Allah is well pleased with a servant who eats his meal then thanks Him for it and drinks his beverage then thanks Him for it.”

It is part of gratitude to busy oneself with Allah's obedience, use His favours as a help in doing so, use them as Allah likes them to be used, and this is the utmost in gratitude. One should not become arrogant, boast before others of the blessings granted, transgress, wrong others or overstep the limits in dealing with them. He who does so has not been thankful but has denied Allah's favours. Denial leads to dispossession and one's blessings being changed into afflictions.

The Exalted says,

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُعَيِّرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَى قَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُعَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ.

“Because Allah will never change the grace which He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their souls: and verily Allah is He All-Hearing and All-Knowing of all things.”¹

Changing what is in themselves means abandoning gratitude for their blessings. He who shows no gratitude exposes himself to dispossession and ruin, while he who is grateful deserves goodness and increase.

Allah, the Exalted says, وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ.

“And remember! your Lord caused to be declared publicly: “If ye are grateful, I will add more favours unto you.”²

It is part of gratitude to see every blessing, even if small, as tremendous, because of the immensity of He who has granted it, Blessed and Exalted is He. Allah’s favours upon His servant are innumerable and the servant is incapable of counting them, let alone thank for them.

Allah, Exalted is He, says, وَإِنْ تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

“If ye would count up the favours of Allah, never would ye be able to number them: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”³

It is incumbent that a person should never look with envy and resentment at those who have been preferred over him in blessings, for it may lead to his disdaining and belittling Allah’s favours upon him, then neglecting to thank for them, and this will lead to Allah dispossess the favours and diverted away from him. Thus, he will neither be given as much as his brother whom he has envied nor retain the little that his Lord has given him, all for failing to thank and observe proper courtesy toward Him. A prophetic tradition state,

انظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ دُونَكُمْ، فَهُوَ أَجْدَرُ لَا أَنْ تَرْدَرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ.

“Look at those who are beneath you, not those who are above you, for it is less conducive for you to despise Allah’s favours upon you.”

¹ Surah 8 Al Anfaal Verse 53.

² Surah 14 Ibrahim Verse 7.

³ Surah 16 an Nahl Verse 18.

Allah bestows more favour on some of His servants over others for mysterious reasons and hidden wisdom. The interests and attract benefits are not known to anyone except Him. So, let each servant be satisfied with Allah's decisions, thank Him for the favours He has granted him, and so ask Him for more. The treasures of the heavens and earth are in His fist, all good is in His hand, He does what He will, and He has power over all things.

Detachment [*Zuhud*]

As for detachment [*zuhud*] from this world, it is one of the best acts to save oneself and worthy devotions. To induce His servants to renounce the world, Allah, the Exalted says,

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا. وَإِنَّا لَجَاعِلُونَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيدًا جُرُزًا.

“Verily we have made that which is on earth as a glittering show for the earth, so that We may test them, as to which of them are best in conduct. Verily what is on earth we shall make but as dust and dry soil.”¹

And the Exalted says,

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتُهَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ. أَفَمَن وَعَدْنَاهُ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ لَاقِيهِ كَمَن مَّتَّعْنَاهُ مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ هُوَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ.

“The material things which you are given are but the conveniences of this life and the glitter thereof, but that which is with Allah is better and more enduring. Will you not understand? Are these two alike? One to whom We have made a goodly promise, and who is going to reach its fulfilment, and one to whom We have given the good things of this life, but who, on the Judgment Day, is to be among those brought up for punishment?”²

And the Exalted says, بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا. وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ.

¹ Surah 18 al Kahf Verse 7-8.

² Surah 28 al Qasas Verse 60-61.

“Nay and behold, you prefer the life of this world, But the Hereafter is better and more enduring.”¹

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

ارْزُهِدْ فِي الدُّنْيَا يُحِبَّكَ اللَّهُ، وَارْزُهِدْ فِيهَا فِي أَيْدِي النَّاسِ يُحِبُّكَ النَّاسُ.

“Renounce [*zuhud*] the world and Allah will love you, renounce what is in other people’s hands, and people will love you.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ، وَعُدَّ نَفْسَكَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ.

“Be in this world as a stranger or a passer-by and count yourself among the people of the graves.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ أَحَبَّ آخِرَتَهُ أَضَرَّ بِدُنْيَاةٍ، وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ دُنْيَاةً أَضَرَّ بِآخِرَتِهِ، فَاتَرَوْا مَا يَبْقَى عَلَى مَا يَفْنَى.

“He who loves his hereafter harms his life in this world, and he who loves his life in this world harms his hereafter. So, prefer that which is permanent over that which is ephemeral.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ أَصْبَحَ وَهَمُّهُ الْآخِرَةُ جَمَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرَهُ، وَحَفِظَ عَلَيْهِ صَيَعَتَهُ، وَأَتَتْهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ رَاغِمَةٌ.

“He who wakes up in the morning anxious for his life to come, Allah gathers his affairs for him, preserves his property, and the world comes to him submissively.”

The essence of detachment is for the love and desire for this world to depart from the heart of the servant and it becomes so insignificant in his eyes that for it to withdraw and leave him in scarcity becomes more pleasing to him and preferable than for it to come to him and make him affluent, and this is as concerns the inward. As for the outward, the renunciate should keep away from it, shunning it by choice when capable

¹ Surah 87 al Alaa Verse 16-17.

of acquiring it, and restricting himself to the strict necessary in the way of food, clothes, accommodation or anything else he may need. As he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لِيَكُنْ بَلَاغُ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا كَرَادِ الرَّكَّابِ.

“Let the provision of each of you from this world be that of a rider.”

He who loves the world desires it in his heart, and strives to amass it with the intention of enjoying its pleasures is one who loves the world and in who there is no detachment at all.

He who inclines toward the world and desires it, not to enjoy but to spend it in benevolent and devotional pursuits is doing good if his behaviour tallies with his intention. However, he is not safe from danger.

He who desires and pursues the world, but is unable to acquire it, remaining poor and destitute, he is a poor man, not a renunciate. If he is patient and contented in his poverty, he will have great merit and reward.

As for he who takes a large share of the world and enjoys its pleasures freely, then claims he neither desires nor loves it in his heart, he is a presumptuous self-deceiver. His claim is groundless, and he cannot pretend to be following the example of any of the rightly-guided leaders and virtuous scholars, neither among the ancients nor the latecomers, Know this!

﴿وَاللَّهُ يَتَوَلَّى هَذَا﴾

May Allah take over your guidance.

Reliance [*Tawakkal*]

Among noble saving, actions are reliance on Allah, love for Him, contentment with Him, good intentions and outward and inward sincerity.

Reliance [*tawakkal*] upon Allah is one of the most noble stations of the people of certitude [*yaqin*] and one of the certitude's most invaluable consequences. Allah, Exalted is He says,

“Thus, put your trust in Allah.”¹

فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ.

And the Exalted says,

“Verily, Allah loves those who put their trust in Him.”²

And the Exalted says,

“And upon Allah let the believers put their trust.”³

And the Exalted says,

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ.

“But on Allah put your trust if you are believers.”⁴

And the Exalted says,

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ، وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا.

“And put your trust in Allah, and Allah is sufficient as guardian.”⁵

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ تَوَكَّلْتُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ حَقَّ تَوَكُّلِهِ لَرَزَقَكُمْ كَمَا يَرْزُقُ الطَّيْرَ، تَغْدُوا خِمَاصًا وَتَرُوحُ بِطَانًا.

“If you were to rely upon Allah as you rightfully should, He would provide for you just as He provides for the birds. They fly off hungry and return satiated.”

A well-known invocation that is in the historical record,

﴿حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَعِنَّمَا الْوَكِيلُ﴾

“Allah is sufficient for us and the best of guardians.”

When Ibrahim, may blessings and peace be upon him, was cast into the fire, he invoked it, as did Muhammad, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, and the believers when they were told,

إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ.

“The people (enemy’s army) is gathering against you.” So frightened them: But it only increased their Faith. They said, “Allah is sufficient for us and the best of guardians.”⁶

¹ Surah 27 an Naml Verse 79.

² Surah 3 ala Imran Verse 159.

³ Surah 5 Al Maida Verse 11.

⁴ Surah 5 Al Maidah Verse 23.

⁵ Surah 4 an Nisaa Verse 81.

⁶ Surah 3 ala Imran Verse 173.

One of our virtuous predecessors, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “He who is satisfied with Allah as his guardian will find a way to every good thing.”

The essence of reliance [*tawakkal*] is ‘certainty’ that all matters are in Allah’s hand, in His fist, that none other than He can cause either harm or benefit or give or withhold. The heart must be easy; confident in Allah’s promise and His guarantee, so that it neither trembles nor becomes agitated when stricken by hardships or problems, neither is it to seek refuge and assistance with other than Allah the Exalted whenever afflicted by difficulties and worries. If a person were to seek any of this with a created being, it should never be inwardly, but only outwardly, and according to the dictates of Divine law.

It is not a condition of reliance [*tawakkal*] to abandon worldly means. On the contrary, one may very well join reliance with making use of secondary causes, so long as one relies on Allah, not on these causes. The sign of sincerity [*ikhlas*] is that one does not depend on them to feel at peace when they are available, but anxious and agitated when they are absent or muddled.

A servant may well have no worldly means, yet not consider to be reliant [*tawakkal*]. This is when he is attached to these worldly matters, rely on other created beings, desirous of what is in their possession. ‘Worldly Means’ are of two kinds, religious and worldly.

Religious means are the necessary beneficial sciences and good deeds. Every Muslim must make use of these but depend on Allah, not on them.

Worldly means are to work, have a profession and all other manners of making a living. It is not permissible to abandon what one needs of them and cannot do without unless one is handicapped, unable to move or to exert effort, or else if one is one of those servants of Allah who are people of gnosis and certainty that Allah has established in such a state.

The rule is that it is not permissible for a man to abandon working for his necessary living unless he is either incapable of working for a living or established in divestment and qualified for it. It is forbidden for a man to leave himself and his dependents in need, begging from others, desiring what is in their possession, when he, may blessings and peace be upon him said,

كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ إِثْمًا أَنْ يُضَيِّعَ مَنْ يَعْولُ.

“It is sufficient sin for a man to neglect those for whom he is responsible.”

﴿وَاللَّهُ سُبْحَانَ أَعْلَمَ﴾

By Allah who knows - Glory be to Him

Love for Allah

As regards to love for Allah, it is one of the noblest and elevated stations. Allah Exalted is He, says,

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ.

“But those of Faith are overflowing in their love for Allah.”¹

And the Exalted says,

فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ.

“Soon, Allah will bring people He will love as they will love Him.”²

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ بِهِنَّ حَلَاوَةَ الْإِيمَانِ، أَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا.

“Three traits will give he who possesses them sweetness in faith, one of which is to love Allah and His Messenger more than anything else.”

And he, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَحِبُّوا اللَّهَ لِمَا يَعْذُوكُمْ بِهِ مِنْ نِعَمِهِ، وَأَحِبُّونِي بِحُبِّ اللَّهِ.

“Love Allah for the favours He bestows upon you and love me for the love of Allah.”

The meaning ‘To love Allah’ the Exalted is for the servant to feel inclination in his heart, attachment and passion for that holiest and loftiest of presences, extreme awareness of its sanctity and transcendence,

¹ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 165.

² Surah 5 al Maidah Verse 54.

together with extreme reverence and awe, free from any thoughts of comparability or illusions of limitation, for Allah is too Exalted.

We insist on this because some of the common people who lack insight, when they hear of the states of the men of Allah and their experiences in loving Allah, may be subject in their minds and hearts to thoughts and illusions that are exceedingly perilous and harmful.

He who is sincere in loving Allah the Exalted is driven thereby to prefer Him above all else, move with determination along the road to His proximity and good pleasure, strive in earnest in His obedience, do his utmost in His service, and forsake everything likely to distract him from His remembrance and proper behaviour toward Him.

One of the best proofs that one loves Allah is to follow with excellence the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him. Allah, Exalted is He says,

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

“Say, (O Muhammad) If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful.”¹

Contentment [*Redha*]

Contentment (satisfy or please) with Allah the Exalted is a rare noble state. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ.

“Allah well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him.”²

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَحَبَّ قَوْمًا ابْتَلَاهُمْ، فَمَنْ رَضِيَ فَلَهُ الرِّضَا، وَمَنْ سَخَطَ فَلَهُ السَّخَطُ.

“Indeed, when Allah love certain people, He put them on trial. He who is contented receives contentment in return, while he who is angry receives anger in return.”

He may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah 3 al-Imran Verse 31.

² Surah 98 al-Bayyinah Verse 8.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِحُكْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ الرُّوحَ وَالْفَرَحَ فِي الْيَقِينِ وَالرِّضَا وَجَعَلَ الضِّيقَ وَالْحَرَجَ فِي الشَّكِّ وَالسَّخَطِ.

“Allah in His wisdom and justice has placed comfort and joy in certainty and contentment but has put oppression and anxiety in doubt and anger.”

He who is contented with Allah is he who is satisfied with His decrees. When He decrees, Transcendent is He, for him that which runs against his desires and displeases him, such as injury to self or property, or hardship, difficulty, or affliction, he must accept this with contentment, neither being angry with Allah’s decree, nor panicky, nor impatient, for Allah, the Exalted has the right to do as He pleases in His kingdom and none may either dispute or object to His sovereignty.

Let the servant beware of “if only”, “why?” or “how?” Let him know that Allah the Exalted is wise and fair in all His acts and decisions, that He never decrees something for His believing servant, even if detestable to the latter, without there being good in it, for it will be a good choice and have good consequences. Let him think well of his Lord, be contented with His decrees, return to Him with humility and neediness, stand before Him submissive and subdued, thank and praise Him in profusion, whether in times of ease or hardship, difficulty or affluence.

﴿وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Good Intentions and Sincerity

Good intentions [*husnu dhun*] and sincerity [*ikhlas*] are among the greatest and most important of action that safe. Allah, the Exalted say, مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ.

“Some of you desire this world, and some of you desire the afterlife.”¹

And the Exalted say,

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُورًا.

¹ Surah 3 ala Imran Verse 152.

“Those who wish for the Afterlife and strive therefor with all due striving, and is a believer, they are the ones whose striving is acceptable.”¹

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى.

“Verify, deeds are valued according to intentions, and surely each person receiving as he intended.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّمَا يُبْعَثُ النَّاسُ عَلَى نِيَّاتِهِمْ.

“People will be resurrected according to their intentions.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

مَنْ غَزَا وَلَمْ يَنْوَ إِلَّا عِقَالًا فَلَهُ مَا نَوَى.

“He who fights intending no more than a camel’s strap, he will receive only what he intended.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

“The believer’s intention is better than his deed.” نِيَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ.

‘Intention’ is the act of the heart and because the heart is superior to the body; therefore acts of the heart are superior to the action of the body; and because the intention is itself profitable, whereas without intention the deeds and actions of the body are valueless.

A hadith reports, مَنْ هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ وَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً.

“He who intends a good deed but does not accomplish it, Allah records it with Him as a complete good deed.”

Persevere in good sincere intentions, may Allah have mercy on you, and never perform any act of obedience without intending it to be for Allah’s sake, to draw nearer to Him, attain to His good pleasure, and obtain the recompense promised by Allah, Transcendent is He, in the life to come, out of His favour and grace.

¹ Surah 17 Al Israa Verse 19.

Never initiate a permissible necessity [*mubah*] activity, even eating, drinking or sleeping, without intending it to be of help in obeying Allah and to give you strength in worshipping Him, Exalted is He.

By merely making the intention a person put the necessity acts together with the devotional and so the means have the same legal status as their goals. On the other hand, the deprived is a person dispossessed of good intentions.

Make numerous good intentions for each activity; whether devotional or merely permissible, you will thus receive, by the grace of Allah, a full reward for each of these intentions. Those activities you are incapable of, intend to perform when able to. Say with sincerity, resolution, and good intention, “Had I been able to . I would have done them.” You will thus obtain recompense similar to that of he who has done them.

It was reported that an Israelite passed by some sand dunes at a time of famine. He said to himself, “Had these been edible and in my possession, I would have distributed them among the people.” Allah revealed to the Prophet of that time. “Inform so and so that Allah accepts his donation and thanks to him for his good intention.”

It was reported that sometimes when the angels raise the servant’s record to Allah, Exalted is He. He the Exalted will say to them, Transcendent is He, “Record such and such a deed to his credit.” The angels will say, “But he has not done it.” Allah will answer, “He has intended it.”

Allah, Exalted is He, says about sincerity,
وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَذَلِكَ
دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ.

“And they have been commanded no more than this: Worship Allah by offering Him sincere devotion, be true in faith; establish ritual prayer; practise regular charity, and that is the upright true Religion.”¹

¹ Surah 98 al Bayyinah Verse 5.

And the Exalted says,

“Is it not to Allah that sincere devotion is due?”¹ أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ.

The Prophet, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

أَخْلَصْ دِينَكَ يُجْزِكَ الْعَمَلُ الْقَلِيلُ.

“Be sincere in your religion and a few deeds will suffice you.”

When he may blessings and peace be upon him was asked about faith, he replied, “It was sincerity with Allah”. هُوَ الْإِخْلَاصُ لِلَّهِ.

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَّا مَا كَانَ مِنْهَا خَالِصًا لَهُ، وَابْتُغِيَ بِهِ وَجْهُهُ.

“Allah does not accept any deeds except those sincere for Him and purely for His sake.”

And he may blessings and peace be upon him said,

مَنْ أَخْلَصَ لِلَّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا أَظْهَرَ اللَّهُ يَنَابِيعَ الْحِكْمَةِ مِنْ قَلْبِهِ عَلَى لِسَانِهِ.

“He who is sincere with Allah for forty mornings, the fountains of wisdom flow from his heart to his tongue.”

Sincerity is for a human being to have no purpose in his devotions, nor in his other deeds other than to draw nearer to Allah and seek His proximity and good pleasure. No other purpose should exist, such as showing off, seeking the approval of others, or desiring what can be obtained from them. Sahl ibn Abdallah al-Tustari, may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him, said, “Sagacious people have searched for the definition of sincerity and found nothing but this: That both one’s movements and standstills, private or public, should be for Allah the Exalted, unadulterated by anything else, whether ego, passion, or this world.”

He who works for the purpose of drawing nearer to Allah and seeking His good pleasure and recompense, he is a sincere person. He who works both for this and to show off, he is ostentatious, and his works

¹ Surah 39 az Zumar Verse 3.

are unacceptable. He who works to show off and would have done nothing at all were it not for the people observing him, he is in formidable danger, and his kind ostentation is that of the hypocrites.

﴿وَنَسْأَلُهُ الْعَافِيَةَ مِنْ جَمِيعِ الْبَضَلِيَّاتِ﴾

We ask Allah protection from such things and safety from all afflictions.

Among the best of actions and deeds that safe are also truthfulness with Allah, vigilance, reflection, short hopes, remembering death in abundance and preparing for it.

Truthfulness [*siddiq*]

Concerning truthfulness Allah, Exalted is He, say,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ.

“O believers! Fear Allah and be with those who are truthful.”¹

And the Exalted says, هَذَا يَوْمٌ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ.

“This is a day when those truthful will profit from their truthfulness.”²

And the Exalted says, مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ.

“Among the Believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah.”³

And the Exalted says, لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ الصَّادِقِينَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ

“That Allah may reward the men of Truth for their Truthfulness.”⁴

He, may blessings and peace be upon him, said,

الصِّدْقُ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، الْبِرُّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ الْعَبْدُ يَصْدُقُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الصِّدْقَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ صِدْقًا. وَالْكَذِبُ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَالْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ الْعَبْدُ يَكْذِبُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الْكَذِبَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَابًا.

¹ Surah 9 at Taubah Verse 119.

² Surah 5 al Maidah Verse 119.

³ Surah 33 al Ahzab Verse 23.

⁴ Surah 33 al Ahzab Verse 24.

“Truthfulness leads to benevolence and benevolence leads to Heaven. A servant is truthful and perseveres in truthfulness until he is recorded with Allah as truly truthful. Lying leads to corruption and corruption leads to the Fire. A servant will lie and persevere in lying until he is recorded with Allah as a liar”.

The beginning of truthfulness is to avoid lying in all speech, and then the truth must be maintained in all works, intentions, states and stations. Truthfulness here means steadfastness in all these and performing them in the best and most cautious manner, doing one’s very best, being serious and resolute to the extreme, both outwardly and inwardly.

Vigilance [*muraqaba*]

As for vigilance or ever watchful, it means feeling Allah’s permanent nearness to the servant, His encompassing him, being with him, aware of him, and gazing at him. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

“Allah is ever watchful over everything.”¹ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا.

And the Exalted says, إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَى.

“For I am with you, hearing and seeing everything.”²

And the Exalted say,

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ.

“It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.”³

And the Exalted says, وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ.

“And He is with you wherever you are. And Allah sees all that you do.”⁴

He may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said,

¹ Surah Al Azhab Verse 52.

² Surah 20 Ta Ha Verse 46.

³ Surah 50 Qaf Verse 16.

⁴ Surah 57 al-Hadid Verse 4.

الإِحْسَانِ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ.

“Excellence is to worship Allah as if you saw Him for if you see Him not, He sees you.”

Thus vigilance belongs to the station of excellence and he who realizes it achieves awe of Allah, the Exalted, shyness lest Allah sees him where He has forbidden him or misses him where He has enjoined him to be, or sees him lazy in obedience, dragging his feet in worship, distracted from His service, forgetful of His remembrance or of proper conduct toward Him.

Reflection [*Tafakkur*]

As for excellent and upright reflection, it has numerous benefits and great profits. Allah, Exalted is He, says,

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

“Thus does Allah make clear to you His Signs: So that you may consider their bearings on this life and the Hereafter.”¹

And the Exalted says, إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ.

“Verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.”²

And the Exalted says, قُلْ انظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.

“Say, “Observe what is in the heavens and earth”.”³

It was narrated from the Prophet, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, that he once said, تَفَكُّرُ سَاعَةٍ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عِبَادَةٍ سِتِّينَ سَنَةً.

“That an hour’s reflection was better than sixty years of worshipping.”

And Ali, may Allah honour his countenance, said, “There is no devotion better than reflection.”

There are many kinds of reflection. The best and most noble is to reflect on Divine acts and signs and the wonders of His making in His earth and heavens.

¹ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 219-220.

² Surah 30 ar Rum Verse 21.

³ Surah 10 Yunus Verse 101.

He who reflects deeply on these gains an increase in his knowledge of Allah, which reflection is the greatest elixir,

Another kind of reflection is to reflect on the favours and blessings that Allah bestows upon you, both religious and worldly. Reflecting deeply on these leads to an increase in one's love for Allah and induces one to thank Him.

Another kind is to reflect on the immensity of Allah's lights upon you and your numerous shortcomings in fulfilling His rights of Lordship. Reflecting deeply on these leads to fear, awe, and shyness of Allah the exalted and induces one to strive resolutely and in earnest to obey Him and fulfil His rights.

Another kind is to reflect on this world, and how evanescent it is, how full of preoccupations and vexations. Reflecting deeply on this leads to detachment from it, forsaking and losing the desire for it.

Another is to reflect on the hereafter, how unending it is, how unadulterated it bliss, and how permanent its pleasures and joys. Reflecting deeply on these, lead preparing for the hereafter, desiring it, and striving for it with determination.

There are many more avenues for reflection. When a servant's insight is sharper, the broader and more abundant his knowledge, the vaster and more abundant his reflection.

Short Hopes and Remembering Death

As for short hopes, frequent remembrance of death and preparing for it, their benefits are immense and its merits great. He whose hopes are short and his remembrance of death abundant will be resolute in good deeds, not subject to procrastination or laziness, detached from this world and desirous of the hereafter, swift to repent and return to Allah the Exalted, distant from whatever may distract him from obedience to Allah the Exalted and from following the path leading to His good pleasure. He whose hopes are long term and scarcely remembrance of death will be the opposite of all this.

Early in this book, when discussing knowledge we have already had a useful discussion of the merits of short hopes and feeling the nearness of death, and everything that follows upon these. Thus, there is no need for lengthy elaboration here.

Al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, asked, “Do you all wish to be admitted to the Garden?” The companions answered, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah.” Then he said, “Shorten your hopes, place your appointed time before your eyes and feel shy from Allah as you rightfully should.”

Once the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, used to invoke in his prayers,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ دُنْيَا تَمْنَعُ حَيْرَ الْآخِرَةِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ حَيَاةٍ تَمْنَعُ حَيْرَ الْمَمَاتِ،
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَمَلٍ يَمْنَعُ حَيْرَ الْعَمَلِ.

“O Allah! I seek Your protection from a world that bars the good of the hereafter, and I seek Your protection from a life that prevents the good of death, and I seek Your protection from hopes that bar the good of works.”

Once Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, asked, “O Messenger of Allah! Can other people be raised with the assembly of martyrs?” He answered, “Yes, those who remember death more than twenty times every day and night.”

He also said, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him,

اَتَكْتَبُوا مِنْ ذِكْرِ هَازِمِ اللَّذَاتِ، فَإِنَّهُ يُمَحِّصُ الذُّنُوبَ وَيُرْهِدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا.

“Remember, in abundance, the Defeater of Pleasure (remembering death) this will expiate sins and detach you from the world.”

When he may blessings and peace be upon him, was asked about the meaning of the “expand” mentioned in the Exalted saying,

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ.

“Is one whose heart Allah expands to Islam so that he has received Enlightenment from Allah?” (no better than one hard-hearted) He may blessings and peace be upon him answered, “When light penetrates the heart, the breast expands for it.” The companions asked, “Is there a sign for this?” He answered, “Yes, to shun this life of illusion, concentrate on the life of immortality, and prepare for death before it comes.”

Imam al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, says in *Bidayat al-Hidaya*, “You should reflect on the brevity of your life, even were you to live a hundred years, compared to your life in the hereafter which is for eternity.”

Consider how you endure hardships and humiliations in the pursuit of this world for a month or a year, in the hope of gaining rest for twenty years, and will you not endure this for a few days in the hope of gaining rest for eternity?

So, you should not lengthen your hopes so much that you come to find works too laborious. Assume that death is imminent. Say to yourself, “I shall endure hardship today, for I may die tonight,” or “I shall endure patiently tonight, for I may die tomorrow.” For death does not pounce predictably, whether as concerns time, situation, or age; but inevitably it will pounce.

Therefore, preparing for it must take precedence over preparing for this world, in which you know you will live only a short while. It may be that only a single breath or a single day remains in your life.

You should think about this daily and impose upon yourself, day by day, patience in obeying Allah. But if you estimate you are to live fifty years and impose upon your ego patience in obeying Allah, it will bolt and rebel. If you heed the above advice, you will be endlessly happy when death comes, but if you procrastinate and neglect, death will come unexpectedly, and you will be endlessly remorseful. When morning comes, people are grateful for having travelled by night. When death comes, certain news comes with it; and you shall learn about it soon.”

Chapter Fifteen

The Creed of *Ahlal-Sunna wal Jamaah*

A concise, comprehensive creed, beneficial, may Allah the Exalted willing according to the manner of the Group that is to be Saved, who are the people of *Sunna* and *Jamaah*, the majority of Muslims.

All praises and thanks belong to Allah to Him alone. May Allah bless our master Muhammad, his family and Companions, and grant them peace.

We know, assent, believe, confess with certainty and testify that there is no god but Allah, Alone without a partner. He is a Mighty Allah, a Great King. There is no lord besides Him, and we worship none other than He. He is ancient and Pre-Existent, Eternal and Everlasting. His firstness has no beginning, neither has His lastness any end.

﴿أَحَدٌ. اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ. لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ. وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

“The One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.”¹

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾

“There is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees all things.”²

¹ Surah 112 Al Ikhlas Verse 1-4.

² Surah 42 Ash Shura Verse 11.

And we affirm that the Exalted, His Holiness renders Him beyond time and space, beyond resembling anything in existence; thus Allah cannot be encompassed by directions, nor be subject to contingent events. And that Allah establishes on His Throne on the manner which He has described, and in the sense which He has intended, in a manner befitting the might of His Majesty, and the exaltation of His Glory and Magnificence.

And that He, Exalted is He, is Near to everything in existence, being “closer to man than his jugular vein.”¹ “He is Watchful and Seeing over all things.”² “He is the Living, the Self-Subsistent, slumber overtakes Him not nor sleep.”³ “He is the Originator of the heavens and earth; when He decrees a thing He only says to it Be! And it is!”⁴ “Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs.”⁵

﴿أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ﴾ ﴿عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ﴾ ﴿الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ﴾ ﴿بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾ ﴿لِلَّهِ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ﴾

And that He, Exalted be He! “is over all things Powerful”⁶, and “have full knowledge of all things”⁷; “His knowledge is all-embracing”⁸ and “keep count of every single thing.”⁹

﴿وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ ﴿وَبِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾ ﴿وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا﴾ ﴿وَأَخْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا﴾

¹ Surah 50 Qaf Verse 16.

² Surah 5 al Maidah Verse 117.

³ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 255.

⁴ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 117.

⁵ Surah 39 az Zumar Verse 62.

⁶ Surah 65 at Talaq Verse 12.

⁷ Surah 33 al Ahzab Verse 54.

⁸ Surah 65 at Talaq Verse 12.

⁹ Surah 72 al Jinn Verse 28.

“Nor is hidden from thy Lord (so much as) the weight of an atom on the earth or in heaven.”¹ “He knows all that goes into the earth, and all that comes out thereof; all that comes down from heaven and all that ascends to that.”² “And He is with you wheresoever you may be. And Allah sees well all that you do.”³ “He knows what is secret and what is yet more hidden.”⁴ “He knows whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf do fall but with His knowledge: there is not a grain in the darkness or depths of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry green or withered, but is inscribed in a record clear.”⁵

﴿وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِّثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ﴾ ﴿يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا﴾ ﴿وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾ ﴿يَعْلَمُ الْسِّرَّ وَالْأَخْفَى﴾ ﴿يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ﴾

“And that he, Exalted be He, will exist over everything and directs events. And that nothing may exist, whether good or evil, beneficial or harmful, except by His decree and will. Whatever He wills is, whatever He does not, is not. Should all creatures unite to move or halt a single atom in the universe, in the absence of His will, they would be unable to do so.

And that He, Exalted be He, hear and see everything, Speaker of a Speech that is pre-existent and does not resemble the speech of creatures.

And that the Mighty Quran is His ancient speech, His Book which He sent down upon His Messenger and Prophet Muhammad, may His blessings and peace be upon him.

¹ Surah 10 Yusuḥ Verse 61.

² Surah 34 Saba Verse 2.

³ Surah 57 al Ḥadid Verse 4.

⁴ Surah 20 Ta Ḥa Verse 7.

⁵ Surah 6 al An Anaam Verse 59.

And that He, Transcendent be He, is Creator of all things and their Provider, Who disposes them as He wills; neither rival nor opponent is there in His realm. He gives to whomsoever He wills and withholds from whomsoever He wills. “He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills.”¹ “He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned for theirs.”²

﴿يَعْفُرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾ ﴿لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ﴾

And that He, Exalted be He, is Wise in His acts; Just in His decrees, so that no injustice or tyranny can be imaginable on His part, and that no one has any rights over Him. Should He, Transcendent be He, destroy all His creatures in the blink of an eye, He would be neither unjust nor tyrannous to them, for they are His dominion and His slaves. He has the right to do as He pleases in His dominion, “nor is your Lord ever unjust in the least to His Servants.”³

﴿وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ﴾

He rewards His slaves for obeying Him, out of grace and generosity, and punishes them when they rebel, out of His wisdom and justice. And that to obey Him is an obligation binding upon His bondsmen, as was made clear through the speech of His messengers upon them be peace.

We believe in every Book sent down by Allah, and in all His messengers, His angels, and in destiny, whether good or bad.

And we testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, whom He sent to jinn and to humanity, to the Arabs and the non-Arabs, “with guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest (it).”⁴

﴿يَاهْدِيْ وَدِيْنِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّيْنِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُوْنَ﴾

And that he delivered the Message, was faithful to his trust, advised the community, did away with grief, and strove for Allah’s sake as is His

¹ Surah 48 al Fath Verse 14.

² Surah 21 al Anbiya Verse 23.

³ Surah 41 al Fussilat Verse 46.

⁴ Surah 9 at Taubat Verse 33.

due, being truthful and trustworthy, supported by authentic proofs and norm-breaking miracles. And that Allah has made it incumbent upon His slaves to believe, obey, and follow him, and that a man's faith is not acceptable, even should he believe in Him, Transcendent is He, until he believes in Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family, and in everything that he brought and informed us of, whether of the affairs of this world or the next.

One of this includes faith in the questioning of the dead by Munkar and Nakir about religion, Tauhid and Prophethood, and in the bliss which is in the grave for those who were obedient, and the torment which it contains for the rebellious.

And that one should believe in the Resurrection after Death, the gathering of bodies and spirits to stand in the presence of Allah the Exalted, and the Reckoning; and that His slaves will be at that time in different states, some being called to account, some are exempted, while others shall enter the Garden without reckoning.

One should believe in the Scales in which good and evil deeds will be weighed; and in the Bridge [*Sirat*], which is a bridge stretched over the depths of Hell; and in the Pool [*Hawd*] of our Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family, the water of which is from the Garden, and from which the believers shall drink before entering the Garden.

One should believe in the intercession of the Prophets, followed by the Faithful Sincere Saints [*siddiqun*], Martyrs [*syuhada*] then the scholars [*ulama*], the virtuous righteous [*salihun*] and the other believers. Indeed, the Greatest Intercession is the prerogative of Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him and his family.

One should believe that the people of Tauhid who have entered the fire shall be taken out of it until not one person in whose heart there lies an atom's weight of faith shall remain in it eternally. And that the people of polytheism and disbelief shall abide in the Fire eternally and forever, "their suffering and penalty will not be lightened, nor will they

have respite.”¹ And that the believers shall abide in the Garden eternally and without end, wherein “There no sense of fatigue shall touch them, nor shall they ever be asked to leave.”²

﴿لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُونَ﴾ ﴿لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ﴾

And that in the Heaven the believers shall see their Lord with their eyes, in a way befitting His Majesty and the Holiness of His Perfection.

And that the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and his family, were virtuous, that their status was of various ranks, and that they were just, good and trustworthy. It is not lawful to insult or denigrate any of them. And that the rightful successor [*khalifa*] to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him and his family, was Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, followed by Umar al-Faruq, then Uthman alShahid, then Ali al-Murtada, may Allah be pleased with them and with all the other Companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah blessings be upon his family and companions and peace and with those who follow them with excellence until the Day of Judgment, and may we be with them.

﴿بِرَحْمَتِكَ اللَّهُمَّ﴾

O Lord by Your mercy,

﴿يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّحِمِينَ﴾

O Most Merciful!”

¹ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 162.

² Surah 15 Al Hijr Verse 48.

Conclusion

A conclusion constituted of seven hadiths from the traditions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, contain comprehensive wisdom and profitable counsels.

First Hadith

Narrated from Jaber ibn Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with them both, who narrated, I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said,

إِنَّ ابْنَ آدَمَ لَفِي غَفْلَةٍ عَمَّا خُلِقَ لَهُ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَرَادَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ لِلْمَلَكِ أَكْتُبْ رِزْقَهُ، أَكْتُبْ أَثَرَهُ، أَكْتُبْ أَجَلَهُ، أَكْتُبْ شَقِيًّا أَمْ سَعِيدًا. ثُمَّ يَرْتَفِعُ ذَلِكَ الْمَلَكُ. ثُمَّ يُوَكِّلُ اللَّهُ بِهِ مَلَكَينِ يَكْتُبَانِ حَسَنَاتِهِ وَسَيِّئَاتِهِ. فَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْمَوْتُ ارْتَفَعَ ذَلِكَ الْمَلَكَانِ. وَجَاءَ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ لِيَقْبِضَ رُوحَهُ. فَإِذَا دَخَلَ قَبْرَهُ رَدَّ الرُّوحَ فِي جَسَدِهِ، وَجَاءَ مَلَكَا الْقَبْرِ فَاِمْتَحَنَاهُ ثُمَّ يَرْتَفِعَانِ. فَإِذَا قَامَتِ السَّاعَةُ انْحَطَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكُ الْحَسَنَاتِ وَمَلَكُ السَّيِّئَاتِ فَاِنشَطَا كِتَابًا مَعْقُودًا فِي عُنُقِهِ، ثُمَّ حَضَرَا مَعَهُ وَاحِدٌ سَائِقٌ وَالْآخَرُ شَهِيدٌ. ثُمَّ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ قُدَّامَكُمْ لَأَمْرًا عَظِيمًا مَا تَقْدُرُونَهُ فَاسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ.

“Indeed, the Son of Adam is forgetful of what he was created for. When Allah wishes to create him, Allah says to the angel, “Write down his provision, write down his traces, write down his appointed time, and write down whether he is wretched or fortunate.” The angel then ascends back, and Allah appoints two other angels to record his good and evil deeds. When death comes, these two angels ascend, and the Angel of Death arrives to take his spirit. When he is placed in the grave, his spirit is returned to his body, and the two Angels of the Grave come to try him. Then they ascend back. When the Hour comes, the Angel of Good Deeds and the Angel of Evil Deeds descend toward him. They untie the record that encircles his neck, then accompany him, one leading him and the other a witness.” Then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings

and peace be upon him, said, “Ahead of you is a formidable thing that you underestimate, so seek help from Allah the Immense.”

This hadith was recorded by al *Hafiz*h as Sayuthi may Allah have mercy on him, in his book ‘Treatise of the Chest’ [*Syarhus-Shudur*]. According to him, it was narrated by Ibnu Abid Dunya and Abu Nu aim.

Second Hadith

Narrated from Abdal Rahman ibn Samurah, may Allah be pleased with him, said, The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, came out to us and said,

إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ الْبَارِحَةَ عَجَبًا!
 رَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي جَاءَهُ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ لِيَقْبِضَ رُوحَهُ، فَجَاءَهُ بِرُّهُ بِوَالِدَيْهِ فَرَدَّهُ.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَدْ بُسِطَ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابُ الْقَبْرِ، فَجَاءَهُ وَصُؤُهُ فَاسْتَنْقَذَهُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَدْ اخْتَوَشْتُهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ، فَجَاءَهُ ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ فَخَلَّصَهُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَدْ اخْتَوَشْتُهُ مَلَائِكَةُ الْعَذَابِ، فَجَاءَتْهُ صَلَاتُهُ فَاسْتَنْقَذَتْهُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَلْتَهَتْ عَطَشًا، كُلَّمَا وَرَدَ حَوْضًا مُنِعَ مِنْهُ، فَجَاءَهُ صِيَامُهُ فَسَقَاهُ وَأَرْوَاهُ.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي وَالنَّبِيُّونَ قُوعِدُوا حِلْفًا حِلْفًا، كُلُّمَا دَنَا لِحِلْفَةٍ طَرَدُوهُ، فَجَاءَهُ اغْتِسَالُهُ مِنَ الْجَنَابَةِ فَأَخَذَ بِيَدِهِ فَأَقْعَدَهُ إِلَى جَنْبِي.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ظُلْمَةٌ، وَخَلْفَهُ ظُلْمَةٌ، وَعَنْ يَمِينِهِ ظُلْمَةٌ، وَعَنْ يَسَارِهِ ظُلْمَةٌ، وَمِنْ قُوقِهِ ظُلْمَةٌ، وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِ ظُلْمَةٌ، فَهُوَ مَتَحَيَّرٌ فِيهَا، فَجَاءَهُ حَجَّةٌ وَعُمُرَتُهُ فَاسْتَخْرَجَاهُ مِنَ الظُّلْمَةِ وَأَدْخَلَاهُ فِي النُّورِ.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي يُكَلِّمُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُونَهُ، فَجَاءَتْهُ صَلَةُ الرَّحْمَةِ، فَقَالَتْ: يَا مَعْشَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، كَلِّمُوهُ، كَلِّمُوهُ، فَكَلَّمُوهُ.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَتَّقِي وَهَجَ النَّارِ وَشَرَّهَا بِيَدِهِ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ، فَجَاءَتْهُ صِدْقَتُهُ فَصَارَتْ سِرًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ، وَظِلًّا عَلَى رَأْسِهِ.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي أَخَذَتْهُ الزَّبَانِيَةُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ، فَجَاءَهُ أَمْرُهُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهْيُهُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ فَاسْتَنْقَذَاهُ مِنْ أَيْدِيهِمْ، وَأَدْخَلَاهُ مَعَ مَلَائِكَةِ الرَّحْمَةِ.
 وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي جَائِعًا عَلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ، بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ حِجَابٌ، فَجَاءَهُ حُسْنُ خُلُقِهِ، فَأَخَذَهُ بِيَدِهِ فَأَدْخَلَهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى.

وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَدْ هَوَتْ بِهِ صَحِيفَتُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِ شِمَالِهِ، فَجَاءَهُ حَوْفُهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ، فَأَخَذَ صَحِيفَتَهُ فَجَعَلَهَا فِي يَمِينِهِ.

وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَدْ حَقَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ، فَجَاءَتْهُ أَفْرَاطُهُ (أي من مات من أولاده) فَثَقَلُوا مِيزَانَهُ. وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَائِمًا عَلَى شَفِيرِ جَهَنَّمَ، فَجَاءَهُ وَجَلُهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَنْقَذَهُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَمَضَى. وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي هَوَى فِي النَّارِ، فَجَاءَتْهُ دُمُوعُهُ الَّتِي بَكَى بِهَا مِنْ حَشَايَةِ اللَّهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَاسْتَحْرَجَتْهُ مِنَ النَّارِ.

وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي قَائِمًا عَلَى الصَّرَاطِ يَرْعُدُ كَمَا تَرْعُدُ السَّعْفَةُ، فَجَاءَهُ حُسْنُ ظُنِّهِ بِاللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَسَكَنَ رَوْعُهُ وَمَضَى.

وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي عَلَى الصَّرَاطِ يَرْحَفُ أَحْيَانًا وَيَحْبُوُ أَحْيَانًا، فَجَاءَتْهُ صَلَاتُهُ عَلَى فَأَخَذَتْ يَدَيْهِ فَأَقَامَتْهُ وَمَضَى عَلَى الصَّرَاطِ.

وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي انْتَهَى إِلَى أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَعُلِقَتْ الْأَبْوَابُ دُونَهُ، فَجَاءَتْهُ شَهَادَةُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَفَتَحَتْ لَهُ الْأَبْوَابُ فَأَدْخَلَتْهُ الْجَنَّةَ.

وَرَأَيْتُ نَاسًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي تُفْرَضُ سِفَاهُهُمْ، فَقُلْتُ: يَا جِبْرِيلُ مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ؟ فَقَالَ: الْمَشَاءُونَ بِالنِّمِيمَةِ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ.

وَرَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي مُعَلَّقِينَ بِالْأَسْتِثِمِ، فَقُلْتُ: مَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ يَا جِبْرِيلُ؟ قَالَ: هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بِغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا.

Last night I saw wonders in my dream.

I saw a man from my community to whom the Angel of Death had come to take his spirit; his loyalty to his parents came and drove the Angel of Death away from him.

And I saw a man from my community around whom the torment of the grave had been spread; his ritual ablutions came and saved him from it.

And I saw a man from my community surrounded by the devils; his Remembrance of Allah came and rescued him from them.

And I saw a man from my community surrounded by the Angels of Torment; his ritual prayers came and saved him from them.

And I saw a man from my community panting from thirst. Whenever he approached a basin, he was driven away from it. His fasts came and gave him to drink until his thirst was quenched.

And I saw a man from my community as the Prophets were sitting in circles, whenever he approached a circle he was sent away. His purification from major impurity [*ghusl*] came, took him by the hand, and sat him next to me.

And I saw a man from my community before the person was darkness, behind him was darkness, on the right of him was darkness, on the left of him was darkness, above him was darkness, and below him was darkness. As he was perplexed therein, there came his Hajj and 'Umra, and they brought him out of the darkness and into the light.

And I saw a man from my community who spoke to the believers, but they did not answer him. His preservation of kinship bonds [*silaturrahmi*] came, saying, "O believers! Speak to him." So, they spoke to him.

And I saw a man from my community protecting his face from the heat and sparks of the Fire. His charity came and became a veil before his face to shade it.

And I saw a man from my community surrounded by the Guardians of Hell, His enjoining good and forbidding evil saved it from their hands and handed him over to the Angels of Mercy.

And I saw a man from my community on his knees, a veil standing between him and Allah. His good character came to take him by the hand and admit him to the presence of Allah, the Exalted.

And I saw a man of my community being dragged by his record which was in his left hand, his fear of Allah came, took the record and placed it in his right hand.

And I saw a man from my community whose scales were light. His little children who had died before him came and made them heavier.

And I saw a man from my community standing on the edge of Hell. His awe and fear of Allah came, saved him from this, and sent him on his way.

And I saw a man from my community who had fallen into the Fires. The tears he had shed for fear of Allah came and took him out of the Fire.

And I saw a man from my community standing on the Bridge, shaking like a palm leaf his thinking well of Allah the Exalted came, his shaking subsided, and he went on his way.

And I saw a man from my community on the Bridge, crawling at times, going on all four at others. His invocation of prayers upon me came, took him by the hand, steadied him up, and he started walking on the Bridge.

And I saw a man from my community who had reached the gates of the Heaven, but they were shut before him. His testimony that there is no god other than Allah came opened the gates and admitted him to Heaven.

And I saw people from my community whose lips were being clipped. I said, “O Gabriel! Who are these?” He said, “Those who circulate talebearing among the people.”

And I saw men from my community hanging by their tongues. I said, “Who are these, O Gabriel?” He answered, “Those who slander men and women believers for nothing they have committed.”

Imam as-Sayuthi recorded this hadith in his book ‘Treatise of the Chest’ [Syarhus-Shudur]. He said that Tabarani narrated the hadith in his collections ‘The Big Book’ [al-Kabir]. It was also narrated by al-Hakim at-Termidzi in his book ‘Essential Anecdotes’ [Nawadirul-Ushul] and by al-Isfahani in his book ‘Enticement’ [at-Tarhib].

Third Hadith

From Rakb al-Misri, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, said, طُوبَى لِمَنْ تَوَاضَعَ مِنْ غَيْرِ مَنَقَصَةٍ، وَذَلَّ فِي نَفْسِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ مَسْأَلَةٍ، وَأَنْفَقَ مَالًا جَمَعَهُ فِي غَيْرِ مَعْصِيَةٍ، وَرَحِمَ أَهْلَ الدُّلَى وَالْمُسْكِنَةَ، وَخَالَطَ أَهْلَ الْفَقْرِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ. طُوبَى لِمَنْ طَابَ كَسْبُهُ، وَصَلَحَتْ سَرِيرَتُهُ، وَكَرُمَتْ عِلَاقَتُهُ، وَعَزَلَ عَنِ النَّاسِ شَرُّهُ. طُوبَى لِمَنْ عَمِلَ بِعِلْمِهِ، وَأَنْفَقَ الْفَضْلَ مِنْ مَالِهِ، وَأَمْسَكَ الْفَضْلَ مِنْ قَوْلِهِ.

“Blessed is he who is humble without having please others, keeps his abasement to himself and does not beg, spends the money he has amassed but not sinfully, is compassionate to the humble and indigent, and keeps company with the people of knowledge and wisdom.

Blessed is he whose earnings are lawful, his inward good, his outward noble, and from whose evil people are safe.

Blessed is he who acts according to his knowledge, gives away the excess of his money and withholds the excess of his speech.”

Al Hafizh Al Mundziri may Allah the Exalted have mercy on him, recorded this hadith in his book “Enticement and Intimidation” [*at-Tarhib wat-Tarhib*]. He stated that *Tabarani* narrated it.

Fourth Hadith

From *Asma binti Umays*, may Allah be pleased with her, said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon him, his family and companions, say,

يُنْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ بَخِلٌ وَاحْتَالٌ، وَنَسِيَ الْكَبِيرَ الْمُتَعَالِ!

يُنْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ تَجَبَّرَ وَاعْتَدَى، وَنَسِيَ الْجَبَّارَ الْأَعْلَى!

يُنْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ سَهَا وَلَهَا، وَنَسِيَ الْمَقَابِرَ وَالْبِلَى!

يُنْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ عَنَّا وَطَعَى، وَنَسِيَ الْمُبْتَدَأَ وَالْمُنْتَهَى!

يُنْسَ الْعَبْدُ يَحْتِلُ الدُّنْيَا بِالْدِّينِ! (أي يطلب الدنيا بعمل الآخرة)

يُنْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ يَحْتِلُ الدِّينَ بِالشَّهَوَاتِ! يُنْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ طَمَعَ يَقُودُهُ!

يُنْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ هَوَى يُضِلُّهُ! يُنْسَ الْعَبْدُ عَبْدٌ رَعَبٌ يُدْلُهُ.

Godforsaken is the servant who is miserly yet proud, forgetful of the Great, the Most High Allah!

Godforsaken is the servant who is overbearing and aggressive, forget of the Compeller, Lofty Allah!

Godforsaken is the servant who is distracted and frivolous, forgetful of the graves and decay!

Godforsaken is the servant who is tyrannical and transgressing, forgetful of the beginning and the end!

Godforsaken is the servant who seeks the world with acts of religion!

Godforsaken is the servant who sells his religion for lusts!

Godforsaken is the servant who is led by his greed!

Godforsaken is the servant who is led astray by his whims!

Godforsaken is the servant who abases himself to obtain his desires!

At-Termidzi reported this hadith, and he said, “Only one narrator [*gharib*] conveyed this hadith and that its lineage is weak.”

Fifth Hadith

From Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “The Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s blessings be upon him, his family and peace, said,

﴿إِذَا فَعَلَتْ أُمَّتِي خَمْسَ عَشْرَةَ حَاصِلَةً حَلَّ بِهَا الْبَلَاءُ﴾، فَقِيلَ: وَمَا هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: إِذَا كَانَ الْمَغْنَمُ دُولًا، وَالْأَمَانَةُ مَغْنَمًا، وَالزَّكَاةُ مَغْرَمًا، وَأَطَاعَ الرَّجُلُ زَوْجَتَهُ، وَعَقَّ أُمَّهُ، وَبَرَّ صَدِيقَهُ، وَجَفَا أَبَاهُ، وَارْتَفَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ، وَكَانَ زَعِيمُ الْقَوْمِ أَرْدَلَهُمْ، وَأُكْرِمَ الرَّجُلُ مَخَافَةَ شَرِّهِ، وَشَرِبَتِ الْحُمُرُ، وَلَيْسَ الْحَرِيرُ، وَاتَّخَذَتِ الْقَبَائِلُ وَالْمَعَارِضُ، وَلَعَنَ آخِرُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ أَوَّلَهَا، فَلْيُرَ تَقَبُّوا عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ رِيحًا حُمْرَاءَ، أَوْ حَسَفًا، أَوْ مَسْحًا.

“When my community commits fifteen actions, afflictions will befall it.” The companions asked, “What are they, O Messenger of Allah?”

He replied answered,

- (1) When the people take turns in appropriating spoils of war.
- (2) If anything in Trust is treated as booty,
- (3) If zakat is considered a burdensome expenditure,
- (4) If a man obeys his wife, (5) yet rebelling against his mother.
- (6) If a man treats and listens to his friends well, (7) but not his father,
- (8) If voices are raised in the mosques,
- (9) When the leader of the community is the worst among them,
- (10) When a man is honoured for fear of his evil,
- (11) When alcohol is widely drunk, (12) When silk is worn by many,
- (13) When female singers (14) and concerts abound,
- (15) and the last among this community curses the first,

When such events occur, let them expect tempestuous winds, sinking into the ground or disfiguring mutations.

This hadith was reported by at Termidzi, and he said, “This hadith is one conveyed by only one narrator [*gharib*] that was narrated by Saiyidina Ali bin Abu Talib.

Sixth Hadith

From Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, who said, “I said, “O Messenger of Allah! What did the leaves (scriptures) of Ibrahim, may peace be upon him, consist of?” He answered,

كَانَتْ أَمْثَالًا كُلُّهَا، أَيُّهَا الْمَلِكُ الْمُسَلِّطُ الْمُبْتَلَى الْمَعْرُورُ، إِنِّي لَمْ أَبْعَثْكَ لَتَجْمَعَ الدُّنْيَا بَعْضُهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ، وَلَكِنِّي بَعَثْتُكَ لِتَرْدَّ عَنِّي دَعْوَةَ الْمَظْلُومِ، فَإِنِّي لَا أَرُدُّهَا وَلَوْ كَانَتْ مِنْ كَافِرٍ.

وَعَلَى الْعَاقِلِ مَا لَمْ لَا يَكُنْ مَغْلُوبًا عَلَى عَقْلِهِ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ سَاعَاتٌ: سَاعَةٌ يُنَاجِي فِيهَا رَبَّهُ، وَسَاعَةٌ يَحَاسِبُ فِيهَا نَفْسَهُ، وَسَاعَةٌ يَتَفَكَّرُ فِيهَا فِي صُنْعِ اللَّهِ، وَسَاعَةٌ يَخْلُو فِيهَا لِحَاجَتِهِ مِنَ الْمَطْعَمِ وَالْمَشْرَبِ.

وَعَلَى الْعَاقِلِ أَنْ لَا يَكُونَ طَاعِنًا إِلَّا لِثَلَاثٍ: تَرْوُدُ لِمَعَادٍ، أَوْ مَرَمَّةٌ لِمَعَاشٍ، أَوْ لَدَّةٌ فِي غَيْرِ مُحَرَّمَ. وَعَلَى الْعَاقِلِ أَنْ يَكُونَ بَصِيرًا بِزَمَانِهِ. مُقْبِلًا عَلَى شَأْنِهِ، حَافِظًا لِلِسَانِهِ. وَمَنْ حَسَبَ كَلَامَهُ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ قَلَّ كَلَامُهُ إِلَّا فِيمَا يَعْنِيهِ.

“They consisted entirely of doctrines for life.”

“O king empowered and being tested, subject to illusions! I have not raised you to accumulate the things of this world one on top of the other, but I raised you to prevent the prayers of those who are wronged from reaching Me, for I never reject them, even from a disbeliever.”

“A man of reason, unless he loses his reason, must divide his time into periods: A period when he communes with his Lord, a period when he brings himself to account, a period when he reflects on Allah’s creation, and a period devoted to his food and drink.”

“A man of reason must move only for three reasons: To acquire provision for the Hereafter, earn a living or find pleasure but in no unlawful manner.”

“A man of reason must be aware of his times, concentrated on his purpose, and in control of his tongue. He who counts his words as deeds will speak little of what concerns him not.”

Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, then said “I asked, “O Messenger of Allah! What did the leaves (scriptures) of Moses, may peace be upon him, consist of?”

He said, “They were all lessons of wisdom.”

عَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ هُوَ يَفْرَحُ!

“I wonder at he who is certain of death yet rejoices!”

عَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالنَّارِ ثُمَّ هُوَ يَضْحَكُ!

“I wonder at he who is certain of the Fire yet laughs!”

عَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالْقَدَرِ ثُمَّ هُوَ يَنْصَبُ!

“I wonder at he who is certain of predestination yet toils!”

عَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ رَأَى الدُّنْيَا وَتَقَلَّبَهَا بِأَهْلِهَا ثُمَّ اطمَأَنَّ إِلَيْهَا!

“I wonder at he who sees the world and how it turns its people about yet feels comfortable and trusts it!”

عَجِبْتُ لِمَنْ أَيْقَنَ بِالْحِسَابِ عَدًّا ثُمَّ هُوَ لَا يَعْمَلُ!

“I wonder at he who is certain of the morrow’s reckoning yet does not do deeds.”

Abu Dharr said “O Messenger of Allah! Give me a religious counsel.”

قَالَ: أَوْصِيكَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا رَأْسُ الْأَمْرِ كُلِّهِ.

He said, “I counsel you to fear [taqwa] Allah, for it is the most important thing.”

I said, “O Messenger of Allah! Give me more”.

قَالَ: عَلَيْكَ بِتِلَاوَةِ الْقُرْآنِ، فَإِنَّهُ نُورٌ لَكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ، وَدِكْرٌ لَكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ.

He said, “Recite the Quran, for it is a light for you on earth and a remembrance for you in heaven.”

I said, “O Messenger of Allah! Give me more.”

قَالَ: إِيَّاكَ وَكَثْرَةَ الضَّحِكِ، فَإِنَّهُ يُمِيتُ الْقَلْبَ، وَيَذْهَبُ بِنُورِ الْوَجْهِ.

He said, “Beware of laughing excessively, for it deadens the heart and removes the light of one’s face.”

I said, “O Messenger of Allah! Give me more.”

قَالَ: عَلَيْكَ بِالصَّمْتِ إِلَّا مِنْ خَيْرٍ، فَإِنَّهُ مَطْرَدَةٌ لِلشَّيْطَانِ عَنْكَ، وَعَوْنٌ لَكَ عَلَى أَمْرِ دِينِكَ.

He said, “Maintain silence except for good words, for it repels the devil from you and helps you in your religious affairs.”

I said, "O Messenger of Allah! Give me more."

قَالَ: عَلَيْكَ بِالْجِهَادِ، فَإِنَّهُ رَهْبَانِيَّةٌ أُمِّي.

He said, "Go to Jihad, for it is the monasticism of my community."

I said, "O Messenger of Allah! Give me more,"

قَالَ: أَحَبُّ الْمَسَاكِينِ وَجَالِسُهُمْ.

He said, "Love the poor and sit with them."

I said, "O Messenger of Allah! Give me more."

قَالَ: انْظُرْ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ دُونَكَ وَلَا تَنْظُرْ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ فَوْقَكَ، فَإِنَّهُ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ لَا تَزْدَرِيَ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ.

He said, "Look at those beneath you, not those above you.

You will thus be less likely to belittle Allah's favour upon you."

I said, "O Messenger of Allah! Give me more."

قَالَ: قُلْ الْحَقَّ وَإِنْ كَانَ مُرًّا.

He said, "Speak the truth even when it is bitter."

I said, "O Messenger of Allah! Give me more."

قَالَ: لِيَرَدَّكَ عَنِ النَّاسِ مَا تَعْلَمُهُ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ وَلَا تَجِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا تَأْتِي، وَكَفَى بِكَ عَيْبًا أَنْ تَعْرِفَ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا تَجْهَلُهُ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ، وَتَجِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا تَأْتِي.

He said, "Let what you know of yourself prevent you from criticising others. Do not be angry with them for things you commit yourself. It is enough of a fault to notice in others what you fail to recognise in yourself and become irritated with them for things you do yourself."

Then he patted me on the chest saying,

لَا عَقْلٌ كَالْتَدَبِيرِ، وَلَا وَرَعٌ كَالْكَفِّ، وَلَا حَسَبٌ كَحُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ.

"There is no intelligence better than considering consequences, no circumspection better than abstention, and no honour except in good character."

This hadith was recorded by *al Hafizh* Al Mundziri, in his book "Enticement and Intimidation" [*at-Tarhib wat-Tarhib*]. He stated that *ibnu Hibban* narrated it in his *Sahih* Collection with similar narration and by *al-Hakim*.

Seventh Hadith

From Abu Dharr, may Allah be pleased with him, also said that the Prophet, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, said that his Lord, August and Majestic, said,

يَا عِبَادِي: إِنِّي حَرَّمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا فَلَا تَظَالَمُوا،

“O My servants! I have forbidden Myself injustice and made it forbidden amongst you, so wrong not one another.”

يَا عِبَادِي: كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلَّا مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ فَاسْتَهْدُونِي أَهْدِيكُمْ،

“O My servants! You are all astray except those whom I guide, so ask Me for guidance, and I shall guide you.”

يَا عِبَادِي: كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلَّا مَنْ أَطْعَمْتُهُ فَاسْتَطْعِمُونِي أُطْعِمَكُمْ،

“O My servants! You are all hungry, save those whom I feed, so ask Me to feed you and I shall.”

يَا عِبَادِي: كُلُّكُمْ عَارٍ إِلَّا مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ فَاسْتَكَسُونِي أَكْسِيكُمْ،

“O My servants! You are all naked save those whom I clothe, so ask Me to clothe you and I shall.”

يَا عِبَادِي: إِنَّكُمْ تُحْطِئُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَأَنَا أَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا فَاسْتَغْفِرُونِي أَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ،

“O My servants! You commit faults night and day, and I am the one who forgives all sins, so ask Me for forgiveness and I shall forgive you.”

يَا عِبَادِي: إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَبْلُغُوا ضَرِّي فَتَضُرُّونِي، وَلَنْ تَبْلُغُوا نَفْعِي فَتَنْفَعُونِي،

“O My servants! You will never be able to cause Me harm, nor will you ever be able to bring Me benefit.”

يَا عِبَادِي: لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجَنَّتُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى أَتَقَى قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ مَا زَادَ ذَلِكَ فِي مُلْكِي شَيْئًا،

“O My servants! Were the first and the last among you, the humans and the jinns, to have hearts similar to that of the most Allah fearing man among you, it would increase nothing to My kingdom.”

يَا عِبَادِي: لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجَنَّتُمْ كَانُوا عَلَى أَفَجَرِ قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مُلْكِي شَيْئًا،

“O My servants! Were the first and the last among you, the humans and the jinns, to have hearts similar to that of the most corrupt man among you, it would detract nothing from My kingdom.”

يَا عِبَادِي: لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجَنَّتُمْ قَامُوا فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ فَسَأَلُونِي فَأَعْطَيْتُ كُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ مَسْأَلَتَهُ مَا نَقَصَ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا عِنْدِي إِلَّا كَمَا يَنْقُصُ الْمِخِيطُ إِذَا أُدْخِلَ الْبَحْرَ،

“O My servants! Were the first and the last among you, the humans and the jinns, to stand altogether and ask Me, and were I to grant each one of them his requests, it would diminish what I possess as much as a needle dipped into the ocean diminishes it.”

يَا عِبَادِي: إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أُخْصِيهَا لَكُمْ ثُمَّ أُوَفِّيكُمْ إِيَّاهَا فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا يَلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ.

“O My servants! It is but your deeds which I reckon for you, then repay you in full, He who meets with good, let him thank Allah, and he who meets with other than that, let him blame only himself.

Muslim, Termidhi and Ibnu Majah narrated this hadith.

Afterword

We have concluded the book, as we have begun it, with hadiths of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, for the blessings [*baraka*] and auspiciousness of the words of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him.

We hope that by this Allah shall make what we have compiled in between acceptable to Him, conducive to His good pleasure, and intended purely for His obedience and proximity.

We hope He will forgive us and overlook whatever errors or confusion it may contain, as well as whatever showing off feelings, pride or conceit may have affected us.

We ask Allah to forgive us all these, as well as all other sins, and we repent to Him from them.

﴿وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ﴾¹ “And who may forgive sins except for Allah?”

﴿رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. وَثُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

“Our Lord! Accept this service from us: You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. And relent us in Mercy; for You are the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.”²

﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾

“Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden Like that which You did lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have the strength to bear. Blot out our sins and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Protector; Help us against those who stand against faith.”³

¹ Surah 3 ala Imran Verse 135.

² Surah 2 al Baqara Verses 127-128.

³ Surah 2 al Baqara Verse 286.

﴿لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ﴾

There is no god other than You, Transcendent are You

﴿اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِذَنْبِي، وَأَسْأَلُكَ رَحْمَتَكَ﴾

O Allah! Indeed, I ask Your forgiveness for my sin, and I ask you for your mercy,

﴿اللَّهُمَّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا وَلَا تُزِغْ قَلْبِي بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنِي﴾

﴿وَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ﴾

O Allah! Increase me in knowledge and allow not my heart to swerve after You have guided me.
Bestow upon me mercy from You, for You are the Bestower.

This book has now been completed, may Allah be praised, with His help and His gracious granting of success.

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ﴾

“Praise be to Allah, who have guided us to this felicity: never could we have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of Allah:”

﴿قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ﴾

“Indeed, the messengers of our Lord brought the truth unto us.”¹

¹ Surah 7 Al- Araaf Verse 43.

﴿سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ﴾

“Glory to your Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power!
He is free from what they ascribe to Him!”

﴿وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ. وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“And Peace on the messengers!
And Praise to Allah, the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds.”¹

﴿وَلَا حَوْلَ قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ﴾

There is neither power nor ability save by Allah, the High, the Immense.

﴿وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ﴾

And may Allah’s blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad,
his family and Companions.

¹ Surah 37 As Saffat Verse 180-182.

Dictation was concluded on Sunday the twenty-second of the blessed month of Shaban of the year 1089 of his emigration, blessings and peace be upon him, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad, his family and Companions.

22nd Syaban 1089H is 8th October 1678CE

﴿تم الكتاب بعونه تعالى﴾

“The book was completed with the help of the Almighty.”